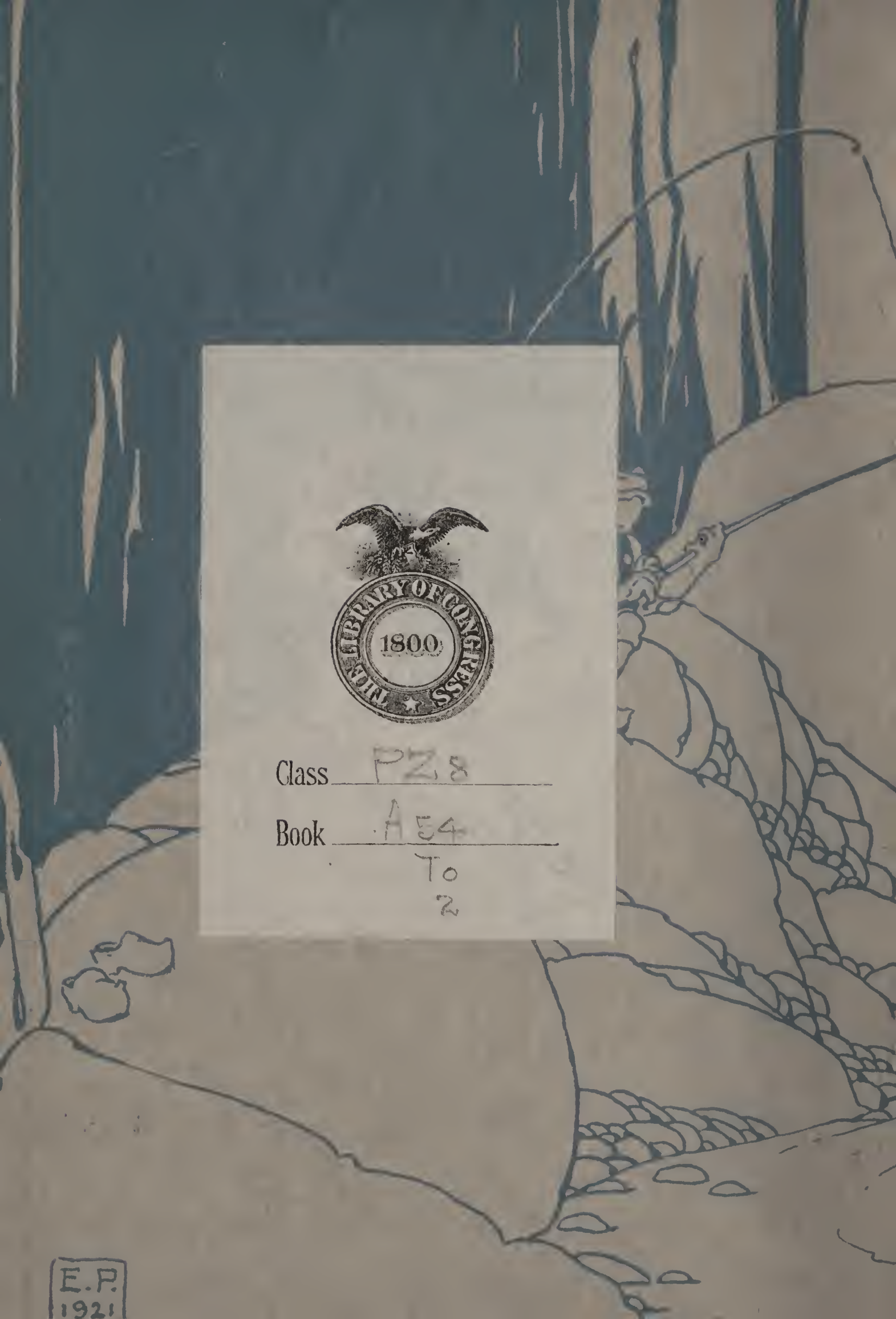
FAIRY TALES AND STORIES

BY

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
1800

Class PZ8
Book .A54
To
2

E.P.
1921

HANS
CHRISTIAN
ANDERSEN

The Children's Classics

HOMER
The Iliad for Boys and Girls
Retold by Rev. A. J. Church
Illustrations after Flaxman

The Fables of Æsop
Edited by Joseph Jacobs
Illustrated by Richard Heighway

The Arabian Nights
Edited by Padraic Colum
Illustrated by Eric Pape

THE BROTHERS GRIMM
Household Tales
Translated by Lucy Crane
Illustrated by Walter Crane

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN
Fairy Tales and Stories
Edited by Francis Hackett and Signe Toksvig
Illustrated by Eric Pape

English Fairy Tales
Retold by F. A. Steel
Illustrated by Arthur Rackham

CHARLES AND MARY LAMB
Tales from Shakespeare
Illustrated by Maud and Miska Petersham

JONATHAN SWIFT
Gulliver's Travels
Illustrated by Charles Brock

CHARLES DICKENS
A Christmas Carol
Illustrated by Francis D. Bedford

LEWIS CARROLL
Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and *Through the Looking Glass*
Illustrated by John Tenniell

ROBERT LOUIS STEVENSON
Treasure Island
Illustrated by Warwick Goble

RICHARD HENRY DANA
Two Years Before the Mast
Illustrated by Charles Pears

Other titles preparing

ELISA

FAIRY TALES AND STORIES · BY

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

PREFACED BY FRANCIS HACKETT

EDITED BY SIGNE TOKSVIG

ILLUSTRATED BY ERIC PAPE

THE MACMILLAN COMPANY, PUBLISHERS

NEW YORK - MCMXXIII

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

P Z 8
.A 54
To
2.

COPYRIGHT 1921
BY THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

Set up and printed. Published November, 1921.
Reissue, August, 1923.

2 2.9776
24

FERRIS PRINTING COMPANY
NEW YORK

EDITOR'S NOTE

Before Hans Christian Andersen wrote a story, he told it to some child, and then he put it on paper, trying to keep it in the same easy conversational language. Naturally his style had no academic elegance, and for this he was scolded by many of his contemporaries. His English translators seem to have agreed with those forgotten critics. The different versions from which the tales in this volume were selected all lift Andersen to an edifying refinement and forced quaintness very far from his own direct and natural manner. A great deal of drastic editing has therefore been necessary and much actual translation. Even so, many stiff turns and awkward phrases are left, but perhaps enough has been changed to restore some of the simplicity of the original.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Hans Christian Andersen	xv
The Tinderbox	1
Little Claus and Big Claus	9
The Princess on the Pea	24
Little Ida's Flowers	26
Tommelisa	36
The Traveling Companion	49
The Little Mermaid	73
The Emperor's New Clothes	99
The Steadfast Tin Soldier	106
The Wild Swans	113
The Swineherd	132
The Nightingale	138

The Ugly Duckling 150

The Snow Queen 162

First story: Which treats of the mirror and the pieces of it.

Second story: A little boy and a little girl. 164

Third story: The flower garden of the woman who could conjure. 172

Fourth story: The prince and the princess. 181

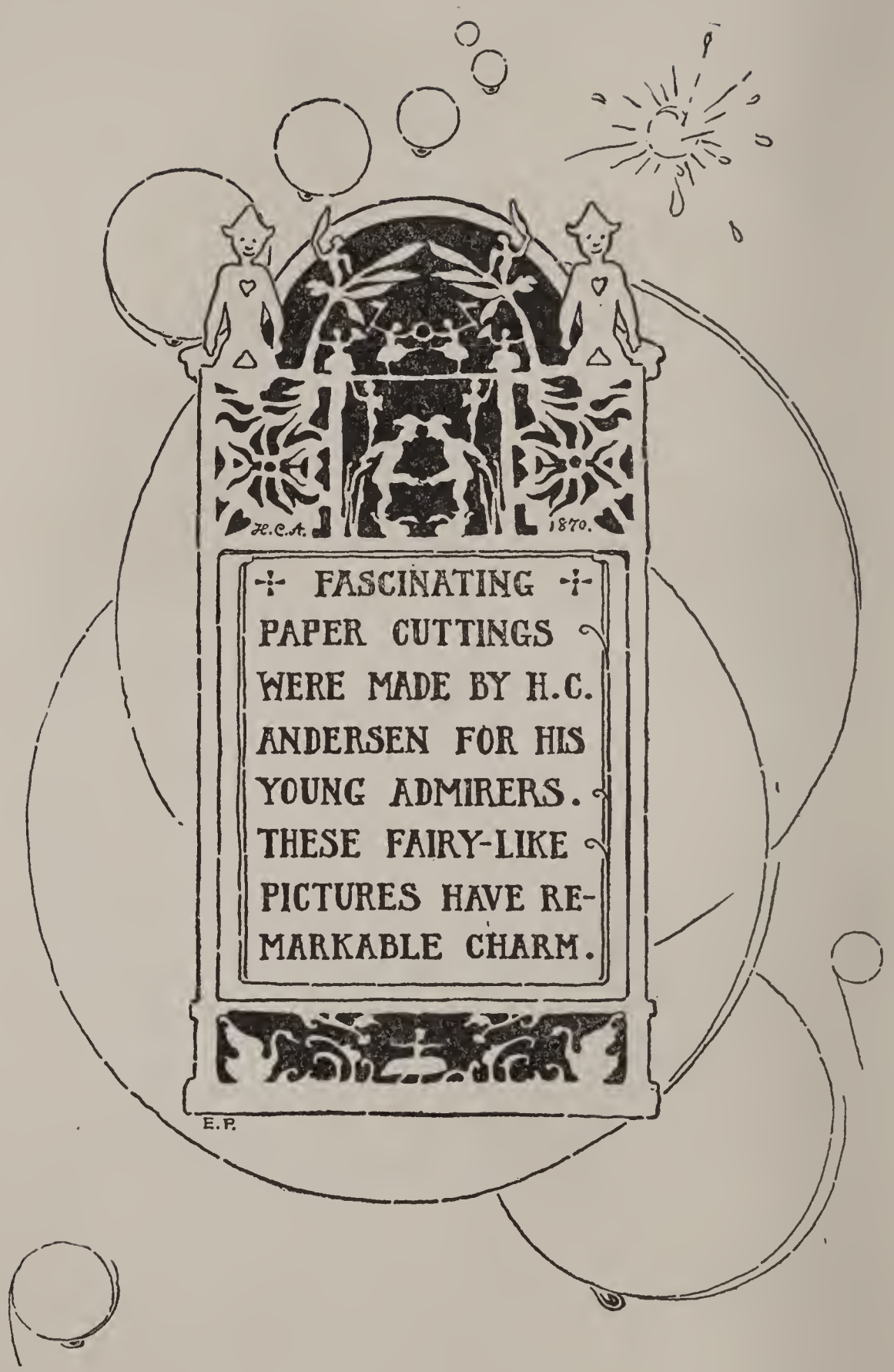
Fifth story: The little robber girl. 189

Sixth story: The Lapp woman and the Fin woman. 195

Seventh story: What happened in the snow queen's castle and what happened afterwards. 199

The Darning Needle. 204

Booby Hans. 209


H.C.A.
1870.
FASCINATING
PAPER CUTTINGS
WERE MADE BY H.C.
ANDERSEN FOR HIS
YOUNG ADMIRERS.
THESE FAIRY-LIKE
PICTURES HAVE RE-
MARKABLE CHARM.
E.P.

List of Illustrations

E. P.

HALF-TITLE, Hans Christian Andersen . . . . . .
ELISA . . . . . *Frontispiece*
TITLE PAGE iii
COPYRIGHT iv
EDITOR'S NOTE. A number of paper cuttings by H. C. A., combined in this design v
CONTENTS, Heading vii
Tailpiece, "That the spirit of Andersen may live forever" viii
The immortal Andersen ix
A combination of silhouettes by H. C. A. x
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS, Heading with silhouette in facsimile . xi
From a paper cutting by H. C. A. Tailpiece.
PREFACE, Heading includes facsimile of paper cutting by H. C. A.
Birthplace of H. C. A.
Tailpiece, cutting by H. C. A.
THE BEGINNING, The Fairy Torch.
THE TINDER BOX, Heading 1
"Mercy on us, what a lot of gold" . . . *To face page* 1
LITTLE CLAUS AND BIG CLAUS, Heading 9
It was the farmer who was going home 12
"Get up all my horses" . . . . . *To face page* 13
"You mustn't say that" 11
Tailpiece 23

THE PRINCESS ON THE PEA, Heading 24
So the Prince married her . . . . . *To face page* 25
Tailpiece, The pea was placed in the art muscum . . 25
LITTLE IDA'S FLOWERS, Heading, silhouette is from a cutting by H. C. A. 26
The flowers in the doll's bed . . . . . *To face page* 29
Tailpiece, As soon as the flowers hear the keys rattle they are very quiet 35
TOMMELISA, Heading, fairy stage in facsimile from H. C. A's cutting 36
Tommelisa on her throne . . . . . *To face page* 48
Tailpiece, the mole talking to the field mouse . . . 48
THE TRAVELLING COMPANION, Heading, There was crepe on the sugar pigs 49
Johannes was thinking of the big, splendid world . . 52
The old crone was able to walk much better than before . 56
"What a hail storm!" said the princess at every blow . 65
Tailpiece, All the houses danced. Drawn in facsimile after a drawing by H. C. A.* 72
THE LITTLE MERMAID, Heading 73
The ship lay over on her side . . . . *To face page* 80
The little mermaid sang most sweetly of all *To face page* 84
The rays fell mild and warm on the cold sea foam . . 97
Tailpiece 98
THE EMPEROR'S NEW CLOTHES, Heading 99
The people could see they were hard at work *To face page* 101
"But he has nothing on," a little child cried out . . . 104
Tailpiece, facsimile of cutting by H. C. A. . . . 105
THE STEADFAST TIN SOLDIER, Heading 106
Every soldier was the living image of all the rest . . . 108
"Stop Him!" shouted the rat 109
Tailpiece, suggested by cuttings by H. C. A. . . . 112
THE WILD SWANS, Heading 113
Yesterday I saw eleven swans swimming in the river . . . . . *To face page* 118
Tailpiece, a silhouette by H. C. A. under which he wrote, "It looks dark" 131
THE SWINEHERD, Heading, the rose and the nightingale were put into big silver cases and sent to the princess . . . 132
Tailpiece, facsimile of silhouette by H. C. A. . . . 137

*From Marie's picture book. Andersen made "picture books" for his many friends, chief among whom were the children, Marie, Agnete and Charlotte.

THE NIGHTINGALE, Heading, It was the little live nightingale . 138
"Tsing-pe," said the cavalier . . . *To face page* 146
Tailpiece, something inside the bird went pop . . . 149
THE UGLY DUCKLING, Heading, She so seldom had visitors . . 150
"Piep! Piep!" said the little one, and rolled out . . . 152
"They're all pretty but that one," said the old duck . . 154
Tailpiece, It doesn't matter if one is brought up among ducks so long as one is hatched from a swan's egg . . . 161
THE SNOW QUEEN. First story, Heading, facsimile from paper cutting by H. C. A. 162
The devil's mirror . . . . . *To face page* 163
Second story, Heading, Kay 164
The Snow Queen's Crown 169
Tailpiece, Kay and Gerda's roses 171
Third story, Heading, The old woman had on a large sun-bonnet 172
Tailpiece, One leaf after another dropped 180
Fourth story, Heading, Gerda 181
The princess sat on a pearl as big as a spinning wheel . . . . . *To face page* 183
Tailpiece, The newspapers had a border of hearts . . 188
Fifth story, Heading, The coach gleamed like a torch . . 189
The old robber woman was dancing with her brat *To face page* 190
Tailpiece, A robber's pistol 194
Sixth story, Heading, The reindeer 195
Tailpiece, The red berries in the snow 198
Seventh story, Heading, Kay and Gerda were grown up but children in their hearts 199
THE DARNING NEEDLE, Heading, a design embodying silhouette of H. C. A. 204
Two street boys were grubbing in the gutter *To face page* 207
Tailpiece, silhouette suggested by a number of cuttings by H. C. A. 208
BOOBY HANS, Heading 209
"Hello, here I am," shouted Booby Hans 211
Then Booby Hans was a King and he had a wife and a crown 213
Tailpiece, facsimile of clipping by H. C. A. . . . 214
THE END, Love and Chivalry 215

PREFACE

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN

I

TO know Hans Christian Andersen you must read The Ugly Duckling. He was himself the ugly duckling. Toward the end of his life he rested back cheerfully and said in his swan song, "My life is a lovely story, happy and full of incident. . . ." But that was after it had been discovered that he was a swan. When he told so humorously but so sympathetically about the poor, miserable duckling that every one

pecked at because he was too big and was so different from the others, he was thinking of his own early life.

For because he was very tall and very thin, and had curls and a high soprano voice, he aroused in other children a cruel desire to punish him for being unlike themselves. And, unfortunately, he could be made to suffer. The outer world he could not control, and he was easily frightened and hurt. When he went to school he made his mother promise that if the teacher ever hit him he needn't stay there, and when the teacher hit him one day he ran home and didn't go back. When he went to work in the factory he sang so beautifully that they all stopped work to listen to him, but then one of the workers said he was a little girl and they teased him so hard he had to quit. He says himself that he was extremely spoiled. One reason he was so spoiled was because he was unable to fight for himself among rough-and-tumble children, and his father and mother tried hard to make it up to him.

Hans Christian's father was a shoemaker. Like his vivid son, the father loved the sights and sounds of the country, the tall still beech woods of Denmark, its warm-colored meadows, its flowers and bending streams, the insects and the animals, the wind and the clouds. Also he liked the old country people who lived in an asylum in Odense, and among these cronies Hans Christian heard many stories that he did not forget. It was not from choice that the father was a town shoemaker. His own people had been farmers but a fire and an injury to his father had cost them their home, and he had been forced to learn a trade.

In the end, to escape from his dull trade, the father joined Napoleon's armies in the hope of quick promotion, but the war came to a sudden end, he returned home in broken health, and soon he died. This left Hans Christian and his mother all alone. After some time the mother married again and Hans Christian could

E.P.
Birth place at Odense of
Hans Christian Andersen • 1805

do pretty much as he liked in his small Danish town. His joy was a little theater which he himself had put together. He had a number of dolls he dressed himself, and he made up his own plays. His mother thought they were wonderful plays. Because he could sing he hoped he could get on the stage and he made friends with a theatrical handbill man who gave him free handbills and even brought him to the real theater. From the handbills alone, and their long list of characters, he made up stories he told to himself. This was the beginning of his fairy tales.

II

But before Hans Christian Andersen came to write fairy tales he was to leave his provincial home and go to the capital to seek his fortune.

One evening in Copenhagen just a hundred years ago there was a small dinner party to which Hans Christian came without being invited. It was at the house of Siboni, director of the Royal Conservatory, and his guests were men like himself—Weyse, the composer, Baggesen, the poet, and others interested in the arts.

As they were seated at the table the housekeeper, very excited, came rushing in. She had just heard the most extraordinary story, she told the whole company—she had to tell the whole company because Siboni was an Italian and did not understand Danish very well. She spoke to the guests, fellow Danes, and the guests spoke to their host.

Outside, she said, was a young man, really a boy, who wanted to sing for the master. He was remarkable! He had traveled by stage from his home town, Odense, to seek his fortune in Copenhagen, where he had no friends, and now he was down to his last dollar. He had told her his whole story, the poor chap. His father was dead. In Odense he had often taken small parts in

the theater and he'd sung in the choir; there in the theater he had learned Siboni's name and he was sure that if only Siboni would try his voice everything would be right. He had meant to find work in Copenhagen, he said, and he had apprenticed himself to a carpenter, but the other apprentices had been so rough he couldn't stay there. He knew all he needed was a chance. Besides, he had written plays himself and he could act, he knew he could. . . .

The housekeeper wanted them to see for themselves this remarkable child, whose name was Hans Christian Andersen. As by this time the guests were much impressed and as also they had come to the end of dinner she led them out.

They gazed at the intruder as he stood simply and appealingly before them. He was no beauty. He was tall and exceedingly thin, and he was wearing his father's best coat made over for him. His hair was curly, he had a prominent Adam's apple, and he had a high soprano voice. The company looked at one another as Siboni took him into the room where stood the piano.

But his voice was lovely and sincere. Filled with excitement the boy sang, declaimed some scenes from Holberg, and then recited some poems. The poems were sad. With their sentiment and with the feeling of his own miserable plight the fourteen-year-old youth ended in actual tears.

The party broke into comforting applause. "I predict that something'll come of this boy," said Baggesen. "Yes," said Weyse, who had been a poor boy himself, "but we must really see what we can do to help him." Siboni thought he could make a place for him, and Hans Christian was told to call on Weyse the following day.

As Hans Christian left, his heart bounding with happiness, the housekeeper patted him on the cheek. "I heard Professor Weyse say he had collected $50 for you, and he'll be your friend, never fear!"

III

And he was. Though no one could have been poorer than Hans Christian, or more friendless, or more strangely at sea in the world, this kind group of Danish literati saw promise in him of the sort they valued, and until he had completed his education and actually received a royal pension he never ceased to find a helping hand.

The fact that he was given a home at Siboni's did not seem so strange to Hans Christian Andersen. It was exactly the sort of miracle in which he believed. "The wonderful," he said, "has always been truth to me." But even though he found these men ready to help him his way was not easy. When his voice failed and he was kept at school by his benefactors because of his other talents, he was haunted by the fear of his own unworthiness. His imagination whipped him and he could not live without kindness, sympathy, praise. This sometimes made him seem quite silly. One good friend, Admiral Wulff, who translated Shakespeare into Danish, laughingly recollects that Hans Christian had come to him at his home saying, "You have translated Shakespeare; I admire him greatly. But I also have written a tragedy. Shall I read it to you?" Yet this very yearning for recognition and admiration was due, as it so often is due, to the fact the man did not quite believe in himself or in his own powers.

IV

To try his powers he attempted the highest kind of literature. He wrote tragedies and solemn poems and serious romances. He was determined to be important and he felt for a long time that his fairy tales were just "little things." It was afterward, when he formed them in that "graphic, crooning, living, dancing, jumping style" of his, that he knew they were the natural

and complete expression of his real self. In these tales, so many of them taken from the gnarled and weathered folk tales of old Denmark, he was at last thoroughly at home. He was at ease in this world of slippered kings and pouting princesses, of witches on their broomsticks, of storms and terrors and icy seas and ocean caverns, of flowers that waltz and figures in porcelain that fall in love. With a quick and knowing eye he moved in this universe of birth and love and death, of joy and happiness, hunger and desire. He opened a casement on this world of his dancing imagination with a perfect understanding of its quality—with gaiety, with tenderness, with sly and glinting humor.

We know from Georg Brandes, the great Danish critic whose description of Andersen's style I have just quoted, what a childlike figure Andersen always remained. Brandes is himself a man of immense moral courage and unsparing critical force. He could not help noting Andersen's painful "wish to please and win the affection of every single person he encountered on his path." Yet Brandes gives a sympathetic picture of the famous man coming to be encouraged and admired. "He was most winning," he says, "when he paid me a visit, as he occasionally did, in the ridiculously small room, very high up, which I then inhabited. He would come in, sit down on the narrow, leather-covered stool that was all I could offer him, glance askance at the window, however carefully it might be closed, move, in his dread of a draught, a little away from it, and take a manuscript out of his breast pocket."

V

Long-suffering as he was, and anxious to placate the world, Hans Christian prudently and serenely made his way to the top. His own life was his most wonderful fairy tale. One of Brandes' stories tells of Andersen's revenge on the dean who snubbed him at confirmation

because he was so poor. In later years this dean was stationed in the neighborhood of a Danish royal residence. It so happened that Andersen was the guest of the King. Knowing that the King understood him, Andersen inquired one morning if he could ask a favor. He wished to borrow the King's carriage with the full royal equipage. The King was amused to grant him the favor, and then, clothed in all his glory, Andersen amiably called on the dean and had the joy of knowing all during his visit that outside the dean could see waiting for him the coach and four horses and liveried postilions of a King.

It was, in the literal sense, poetic justice, especially in a state where the King is the head of the church. But the man who could do that could also tell us the most touching fact about his confirmation. He wore boots for the first time. "The boots creaked, and that inwardly pleased me, for thus the congregation would hear that they were new."

Here we have the touch that makes Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tales so deep—the unexpected and delicious fidelity to real experience. He believed, yes, that "there is a loving God who directs all things for the best." But this belief did not close his eyes to the difference between his beloved moral order and the human order to which an artist must be true. Sometimes Hans Christian is merely sweet and idyllic. His finest triumph is not that he is idyllic but that, believing in a loving God, he keeps the variety, the pattern, of adventurous and unpredictable life. He creates. And to his creations he gives a will of their own.

Why do we like Hans Christian Andersen? Personally I like him because he walked right up to this stern old universe and stroked it so comprehendingly on the nose. Like most people who really have an imagination, whether it be a terrible imagination like Swift's, or a sweet one like his own, he did not stand off from the

world to hang it with mere tinsel and Christmas candles. He didn't play with the thickness and toughness of reality. He took reality as it is, which children nearly all respect, and then he peopled it with his own daring yet reasonable creations, which children generally admire. Children live far too much amid the pressure and obstacle of fact to want a world of bland insipidity, a world from which pressure and obstacle have been removed. But they do rejoice, with high-hearted partisanship, in the conquest of dangers and terrors. They worship heroes and heroism because they feel the need of heroism and want to be heroes themselves. And it is because Hans Christian really lives like a child in the freshness of his senses and the quickness of his hopes and fears that he has been able, in these imperishable tales, to win the allegiance of the most realistic of all audiences.

VI

"He remembered so vividly in how many shapes it had come to him," says Hans Christian of the fairy tale, "sometimes young and fair, like spring itself, a lovely little girl, with a wreath of woodruff in her hair and a branch of the beech in her hand, her eyes shone like deep forest lakes in bright sunshine; at other times it had come in the shape of a peddler who had opened his box of wares and let the silken ribbons wave with verses and inscriptions of old memories: but it was most delightful, after all, when it came as 'old Granny,' with silver-white hair and eyes so large and wise; she could tell so well about the oldest times, ever so long before princesses spun yarn on golden spindles, while dragons and serpents lay outside and guarded them."

Isn't it true, that the dragons and serpents are always conquered in fairy tales, that generosity is always rewarded, and sincerity always triumphant and goodness always the source of joy? Isn't it true that

even Hans Christian avoids the ugly riddle of evil, and believes what he wants to believe? Let him answer himself:

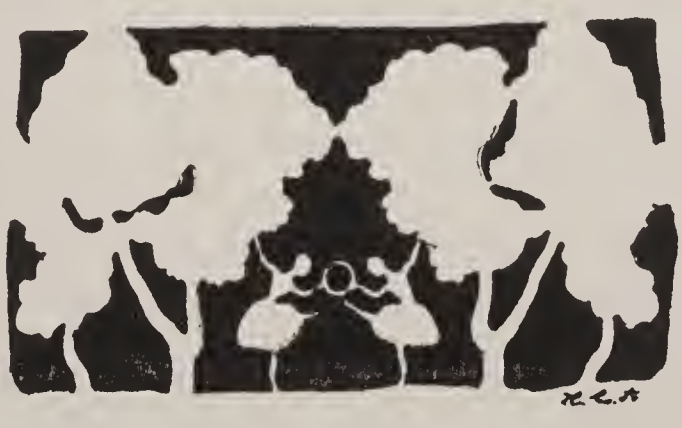
"By the big brew!" said the woman, "haven't you had enough of fairy tales? I thought most people had had enough of them. There are other things to be looked after, and other things to mind. Even children have got beyond them. Give the little boys a cigar and the little girls a new crinoline—they like that much better. Listen to fairy tales! No, indeed, there are other things to be looked after, much more important things to be done."

VII

But Hans Christian Andersen is right. Fairy tales and poetry—"two yards of the same piece of stuff"—are more than knowledge and poetry-in-bottles. They are our dream and intuition, the hem of our garment of immortality.

So, as he says, "fairy tales never die." Only it took his genius, a genius at once exiled and familiar, easy and ethereal, to open again the legends and traditions of humanity. These are sealed volumes, and to have loosened their pages to children everywhere in the world is Andersen's greatest fairy tale.

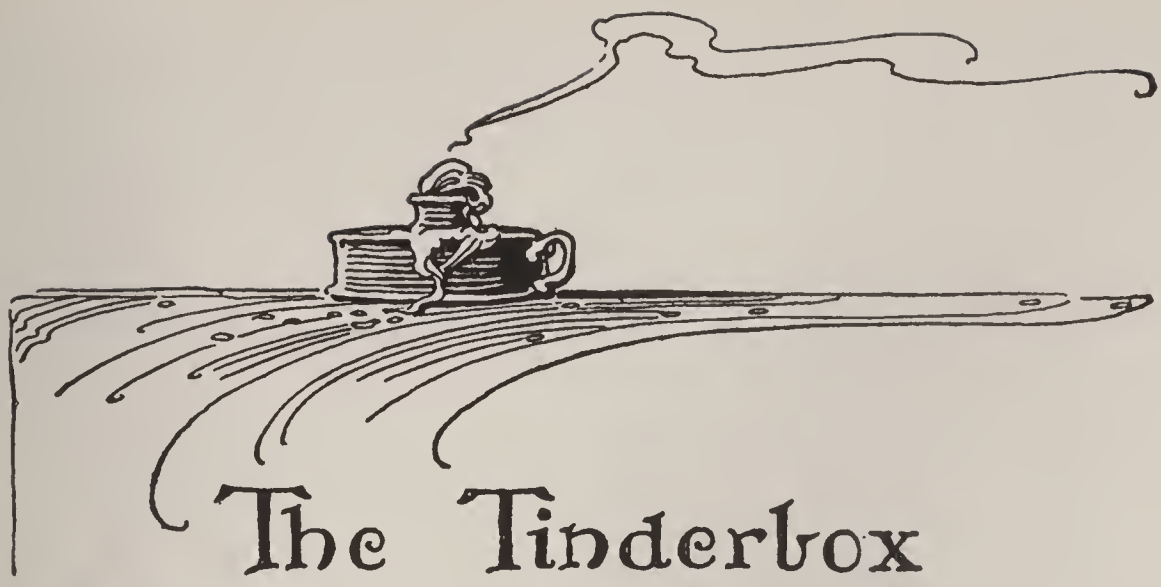
FRANCIS HACKETT.



Rolighed

"My dearest home, where my life got its glow and my harp its sound." Here, in 1875, died

Hans Christian Andersen



The Tinderbox

A SOLDIER was marching along the highroad; one, two! one, two! He had his knapsack on his back and his sabre by his side, for he had been in the war and now he was going home. Then he met an old witch on the highroad; she was horrid, her lower lip hung right down on her breast. She said, "Good evening, soldier! What a nice sabre you have and what a big knapsack; you are a regular soldier. Now you're going to get all the money you want!"

"Thank you, old witch," said the soldier.

"Do you see that big tree?" said the witch, and pointed to a tree next to them. "It's all hollow inside. You're to climb up to the top, and then you'll see a hole, and you can let yourself through that and far down into the tree. I'll tie a rope around you so that I can pull you up again when you call me."

"And what am I going to do down in the tree?" asked the soldier.

"Get money," said the witch, "you see, when you get down to the bottom of the tree you'll be in a big hall; it's very bright because there are more than a hundred lamps burning in it. Then you'll see three doors with the keys in, so you can open them. If you go into the first room, you'll see a big chest in the middle of the floor, and there is a dog sitting on top of it; his eyes

are as big as saucers, but don't you mind that! I'll give you my blue-checked apron, you can spread that out on the floor; then walk right up to the dog, take him, and put him on my apron, open the chest and take all the money you want. It's copper money, but if you'd rather have silver, then you must go into the next room. In there is a dog with eyes as big as mill wheels, but don't you mind that, put him on my apron and help yourself to the money! But if you want gold you can have that too, and just as much as you can carry, if you go into the third room. But the dog on the money chest in there has two eyes and each of them as big as the Round Tower in Copenhagen. That's a regular dog, I tell you! But don't you mind that, just put him on my apron, then he won't hurt you, and take all the gold you want out of the chest!"

"That's not so bad!" said the soldier. "But what am I going to have to give you, old witch, because I suppose you'll want something too!"

"No," said the witch, "I don't want a single penny! All you have to bring me is an old tinderbox that my grandmother forgot when she was down there last."

"Well!. Tie the rope around me," said the soldier.

"Here it is," said the witch, "and here is my blue-checked apron."

Then the soldier climbed up in the tree, let himself drop through the hole, and there he was, as the witch had said, down in the big hall where the many hundred lamps were burning.

Now he opened the first door. Ugh! There sat the dog with eyes as big as saucers and glared at him.

"You're a nice fellow!" said the soldier, put him on the witch's apron and took all the copper money he could carry in his pockets. Then he shut the chest, put the dog up on it again, and went into the second room. Ugh! There sat the dog with eyes as large as mill wheels!

1613

"You shouldn't look at me as much as that," said the soldier, "you might get a pain in the eye!" And then he put the dog on the witch's apron, but when he saw the heaps of the silver money in the chest, he threw away all the copper money he had, and filled his pockets and his knapsack with nothing but silver. Now he went into the third room. Oh, this was horrid! The dog in there really had two eyes as large as the Round Tower and they turned in his head just like wheels!

"Good evening!" said the soldier and touched his cap, because he had never seen a dog like that before; but when he had looked at him a little while he thought, "That's enough now," and lifted him down on the floor. Then he opened the chest, and mercy on us what a lot of gold! With that he could buy all of Copenhagen and the cake women's sugar pigs, and all the tin soldiers, whips, and rocking horses in the world! That was certainly money! And now the soldier threw away all the silver coins he had filled his pockets and his knapsack with, and put in gold instead. He filled pockets, knapsack, cap, and boots until he could hardly walk. Now he had money! He put the dog up on the chest, slammed the door, and shouted up through the tree:

"Pull me up, now, old witch!"

"Have you got the tinderbox?" asked the witch.

"That's right," said the soldier, "I forgot all about that," and he went back and took it. The witch pulled him up, and there he was on the highroad again with pockets, boots, knapsack, and cap full of money.

"And what do you want that tinderbox for?" asked the soldier.

"That's none of your business," said the witch, "you've got money now, just give me the tinderbox!"

"Hoity-toity," said the soldier, "you tell me right away what you want it for, or I'll draw my sabre and chop off your head!"

"No," said the witch.

Then the soldier chopped off her head. There she lay! He tied all his money up in her apron, took it on his back like a bundle, put the tinderbox in his pocket, and walked straight to the town.

It was a nice town, and he stopped at the nicest inn and asked for the very best rooms and his favorite dishes, because he was rich now with all that money. The servant who polished his boots did think that they were funny old boots for such a rich gentleman, but he hadn't bought his new ones yet. Next day he got boots fit to be seen in, and lovely new clothes. The soldier was a fine gentleman now, and the people told him about all the grand things in their town, and about their king and how charming a princess his daughter was.

"Where can I see her?" asked the soldier.

"You can't see her at all!" everybody said. "She lives in a big copper castle with ever so many walls and towers around it! Only the king is allowed to go in and out, because it has been foretold that she is going to marry just a common soldier, and the king doesn't like that!"

"I'd certainly like to see her," thought the soldier, but that was the one thing he couldn't do.

Now he had a very good time; he went to the theater, he drove in the park, and he gave ever so much money to the poor, and that was kind of him. He knew well enough from former days how bad it is not to have one penny. He was rich now, and had nice clothes, and he had many friends who told him that he was all right, a real gentleman, and the soldier liked that. But since he spent money every day and didn't get any back at all, he had only two cents left at last and had to move away from the beautiful rooms where he had been living and up to a tiny little garret right under the roof. There he had to brush his own boots and mend them with a darning needle, and none of his friends came to see him, because there were so many stairs to climb.

One evening it was getting quite dark and he couldn't even buy a candle, but then he remembered that there was a little piece left in the tinderbox which he had taken from the hollow tree that the witch had helped him down in. He got out the tinderbox and the piece of candle, but just as he struck fire and the sparks flew from the flint, the door sprang open, and the dog with eyes as big as saucers whom he had seen down under the tree stood before him and said, "What does my master command?"

"What's that!" said the soldier, "this is a funny tinderbox. I wonder if I can get what I want? Get me some money," he said to the dog and pop, he was gone! Pop, he was back again, and with a big bag full of money in his mouth.

Now the soldier knew what a lovely tinderbox it was. If he struck it once, the dog came that sat on the chest with the copper money; if he struck it twice the one with the silver money came, and if he struck it three times the one with the gold came. And so the soldier moved down into the beautiful rooms again, put on his good clothes, and then all his friends knew him right away, and liked him ever so much.

Once he happened to think, "Isn't it a queer thing that nobody can get to see that princess? They all say she is so lovely, but what good does that do when she always has to sit in the big copper castle with the many towers. I wonder if I couldn't possibly get to see her? Where's my tinderbox!" And then he struck fire, and pop came the dog with eyes as big as saucers.

"I know that it's in the middle of the night," said the soldier, "but I would so very much like to see the princess for just one little moment!"

The dog was out of the door right away, and before the soldier had time to think he saw him again with the princess. She was asleep on the back of the dog, and she was so lovely that anybody could see she was a real

princess. The soldier couldn't help it, he had to kiss her, because he was a regular soldier. Then the dog ran back with the princess, but when it was morning and the king and queen were pouring their tea, the princess said that she had had such a strange dream that night about a dog and a soldier. She had been riding on the dog and the soldier had kissed her.

"That's a pretty story, I must say!" said the queen.

The next night one of the old court ladies had to watch at the bed of the princess to see if it were a real dream, or what it might be. The soldier was so terribly anxious to see the beautiful princess again that the dog came at night and took her and ran as fast as he could, but the old court lady put water boots on and ran just as fast after him. When she saw them disappear into a large house, she thought, "Now I know where they are," and she wrote a big cross on the door with a piece of chalk. Then she went home and went to bed, and the dog came back again with the princess, but when he saw that a cross had been written on the door, he took a piece of chalk too and put crosses on all the doors in town, and that was a clever trick, because now of course the lady wouldn't be able to find the right door when they all had crosses on.

In the early morning the king and queen, the old court lady and all the officers came to see where it was that the princess had been.

"There it is!" said the king when he saw the first door with a cross on.

"No, my dear, there it is!" said the queen when she saw another door with a cross on.

"But there is one, and there is one!" they all said; wherever they looked there were crosses on the doors, and so they could see of course that searching wasn't of much use.

But the queen happened to be a very clever woman who could do more things than ride in a coach. She

took her big gold scissors, cut up a big piece of silk and then she sewed a pretty little bag and she filled that with tiny buckwheat grains and tied it to the back of the princess. Then she cut a little hole in the bag so that the grains could drizzle out wherever the princess went.

At night the dog came again, took the princess on his back, and ran with her to the soldier, who was so very fond of her, and would so have liked to have been a prince so that he could have married her. The dog didn't notice at all how the grains drizzled out right from the castle to the soldier's window where he ran up the wall with the princess. And in the morning the king and queen could see well enough where their daughter had been, and so they took the soldier and put him in jail.

There he was. Oh, how dark and dreary it was there, and then they said to him "You'll be hanged to-morrow." That wasn't a pleasant thing to hear, and he had forgotten his tinderbox home at the inn. Through the iron bars in his little window, he could see the next morning how people were hurrying out of the town to see him hanged. He could hear the drums and see the soldiers marching along. Everybody was running; there was a shoemaker's apprentice too in his apron and slippers, he galloped so fast that one of his slippers flew off and hit the wall behind which the soldier sat and peered out through the bars.

"Hey, you shoemaker boy! You don't have to be in such a hurry," the soldier said to him, "they can't do anything until I come! Don't you want to run over to where I used to live and get me my tinderbox, then I'll give you ten cents, but you'll have to skip!" The shoemaker's apprentice wanted the ten cents and rushed away for the tinderbox, gave it to the soldier, and—well, now we'll hear what happened.

A big gallows had been raised outside the town, and

around it stood the soldiers and many hundreds of thousands of people. The king and queen sat on a beautiful throne right across from the judge and the whole council. The soldier was already standing on the ladder, but when they were going to put the rope around his neck he said that every sinner was allowed an innocent wish before he got his punishment, and he wanted so much to smoke a pipe of tobacco, it would be for the last time in this world.

The king didn't want to say no to this, and so the soldier took his tinderbox and struck fire, one, two, three! and there stood all the dogs, the one with eyes as big as saucers, the one with eyes like mill wheels, and the one who had eyes as big as the Round Tower.

"Help me now, so that I won't be hanged!" said the soldier, and then the dogs jumped at the judges and all the council, took some by the legs and some by the nose and threw them many fathoms up in the air so that they fell down and broke into pieces.

"I don't want to!" said the king, but the biggest dog took both him and the queen and threw them after all the others, then the soldiers were frightened and the people shouted: "Little soldier, you shall be our king, and marry the lovely princess!"

Then they put the soldier in the royal coach, and all the three dogs danced in front of it and shouted hurrah! and the boys whistled through their fingers and the soldiers presented arms. The princess got out of the copper castle and was queen, and she liked that very much! The wedding lasted eight days and the dogs sat at the table and opened their eyes wide.

Little Claus and Big Claus

IN a town there were two men and they had the same name—each was called Claus; but one had four horses, and the other only a single horse. To tell them from each other, people called him who had four horses Big Claus, and the one who had only a single horse Little Claus. Now we shall hear what happened to them, for this is a true story.

The whole week through, Little Claus had to plough for Big Claus, and to lend him his one horse; then Big Claus helped him out with all his four, but only once a week, and that was on Sunday. Hurrah! how Little Claus cracked his whip over all five horses, for they were as good as his own on that one day. The sun shone gaily, and all the bells in the steeples were ringing; the people were dressed in their best, and were going to church,

with their hymn books under their arms, to hear the minister preach, and they saw Little Claus ploughing with five horses; and he was so merry that he cracked his whip again and cried, "Get up, all my horses!"

"You mustn't say that," said Big Claus, "for only one horse is yours."

But when any one passed by again on his way to church Little Claus forgot that he was not to say this, and he cried, "Get up, all my horses!"

"Now, I must really ask you to stop that," cried Big Claus, "for if you say it again, I shall hit your horse on the head, so that it will fall down dead, and then it will be all over with it."

"I will certainly not say it any more," said Little Claus.

But when people came by soon afterward, and nodded "good day" to him, he was so pleased, and thought it looked very smart, after all, that he had five horses to plough his field; and so he cracked his whip again, and cried, "Get up, all my horses!"

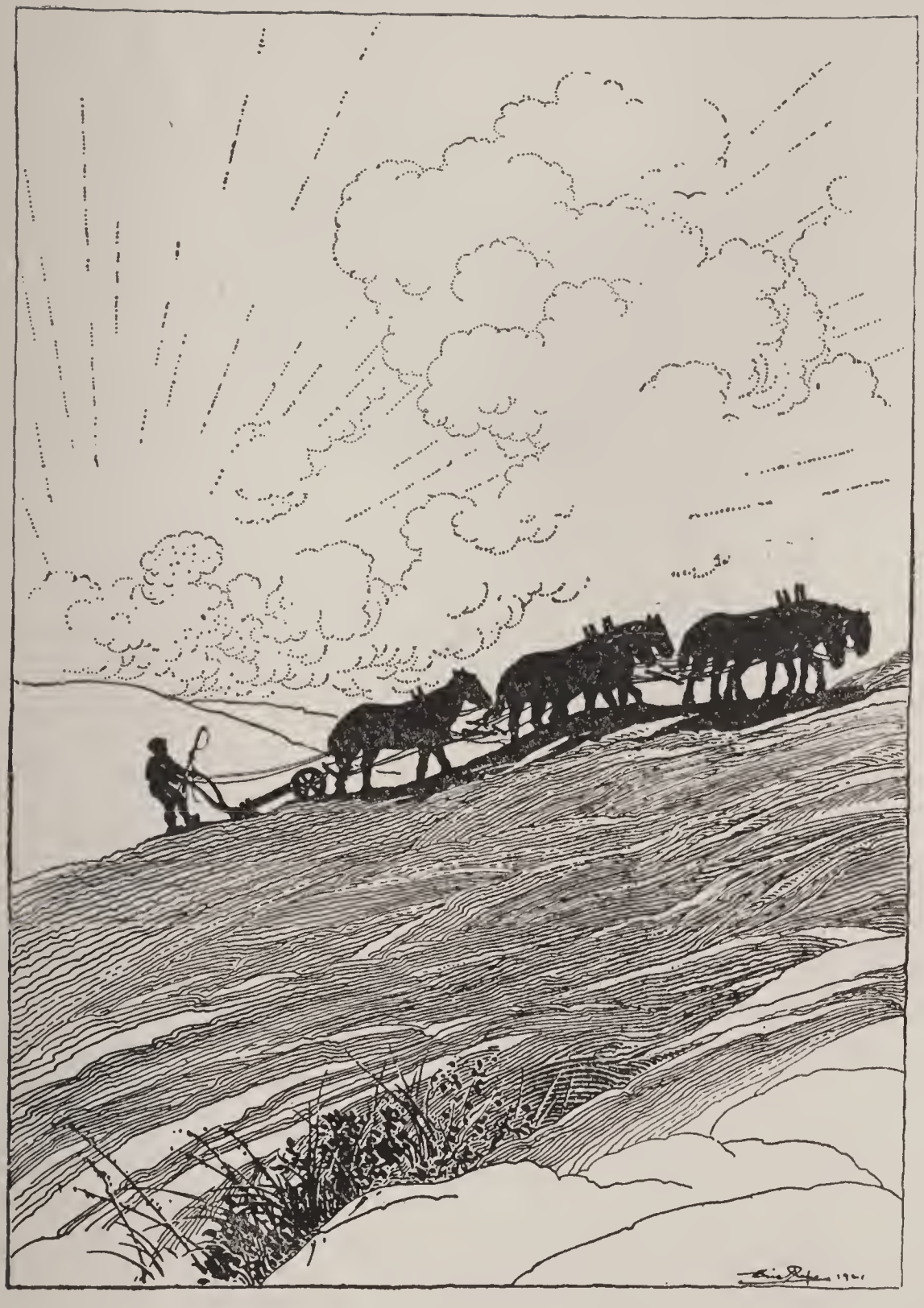
"I'll 'get up' your horses!" said Big Claus. And he took a mallet and hit the only horse of Little Claus on the head, so that it fell down, and was quite dead.

"Oh, now I haven't any horse at all!" said Little Claus, and began to cry.

Then he flayed the horse, and let the hide dry well in the wind, and put it in a sack and hung it over his shoulder, and went to the town to sell it.

He had a very long way to go, and he had to go through a big, dark wood, and the weather became dreadfully bad. He lost his way entirely and before he found it again it was evening, and it was too far to get home again or even to the town before nightfall.

Near the road stood a large farmhouse. The shutters were closed outside the windows, but the light could still be seen shining out over them.



"Perhaps they will let me stay here to-night," thought Little Claus; and he went and knocked.

The farmer's wife opened the door; but when she heard what he wanted she told him to go away, saying that her husband was not at home, and she would not receive strangers.

"Well, I suppose I'll have to stay outside then," said Little Claus. And the farmer's wife shut the door in his face.

Close by stood a large haystack, and between this and the farmhouse was a little outhouse thatched with straw.

"I can lie up there," said Little Claus, when he looked up at the roof; "that's a fine bed. I suppose the stork won't fly down and bite my legs." For a stork was standing on the roof, where he had his nest.

Now Little Claus climbed up to the roof of the shed, where he lay and turned around to settle himself comfortably. The wooden shutters didn't cover the windows at the top, and he could look straight into the room. There was a big table, with the cloth laid, and wine and roast meat and a lovely fish on it. The farmer's wife and the parish clerk were sitting at the table, and nobody

else. She was filling his glass, and he was digging his fork into the fish, for that was what he liked best.

"If I could only get some too!" thought Little Claus, and stuck his head close to the window. Heavens, what a wonderful cake he saw standing there! It was a real party!

Now he heard some one riding along the highroad. It was the woman's husband, who was coming home. He was a very nice man but he had something queer the matter with him, he couldn't bear to see a parish clerk.

If a parish clerk came before his eyes he went quite wild. And the parish clerk had gone to the wife to wish her good day, because he knew that her husband was not at home; and the good woman gave him her most wonderful things to eat. But when they heard the man coming they were frightened, and the woman begged the clerk to creep into a big empty chest which stood in the corner; and he did so, for he knew the poor man could not bear the sight of a clerk. The woman quickly hid all the nice food and wine in her baking oven; for if the husband had seen that, he would have been certain to ask what it meant.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Little Claus, up on his shed, when he saw all the good things put away.

"Is there any one up there?" asked the farmer; and he looked up at Little Claus. "Why are you lying there? Better come with me into the room."

And Little Claus told him how he had lost his way, and asked leave to stay there for the night.

"Yes, certainly," said the farmer, "but first we must have something to eat."

The woman received them both in a very friendly way, spread a cloth on a long table, and gave them a big dish of porridge. The farmer was hungry, and ate with a good appetite; but Little Claus couldn't help thinking of the nice roast meat, fish, and cake, which he knew were in the oven. Under the table, at his feet, he had laid the sack with the horse's hide in it; for we know that he had come away to sell it in the town. He didn't like the taste of the porridge at all, so he trod on the sack, and the dry skin inside gave a loud squeak.

"Hush," said Little Claus to his sack; but at the same time he trod on it again, so that it squeaked much louder than before.

"Why, what have you in your sack?" asked the farmer.

"Oh, that's a wizard," answered Little Claus. "He

says we are not to eat porridge, for he has bewitched the oven full of roast meat, fish, and cake."

"What's that you say!" cried the farmer; and he opened the oven in a hurry, and found all the nice things to eat which his wife had hidden there, but which, he now thought, the wizard in the bag had put there. The woman didn't dare to say anything, but put the things on the table at once; and so they both ate of the meat, the fish, and the cake. Now Little Claus stepped on his sack again, and made the hide squeak.

"What does he say now?" said the farmer.

"He says," replied Claus, "that he has put three bottles of wine there for us; they are standing in the oven, too."

Now the woman had to bring out the wine which she had hidden, and the farmer drank it and it cheered him up very much. There wasn't anything he'd rather have than a wizard such as Little Claus had there in the sack.

"Can he raise the devil, too?" asked the farmer. "I've a good mind to see him now that I feel so cheerful."

"Oh, yes," said Little Claus, "my wizard can do anything that I ask of him—can't you?" he added, and trod on the hide, so that it squeaked. "He says, 'Yes.' But the devil is very ugly to look at; we had better not see him."

"Oh, I'm not afraid at all. I wonder what he'll look like?"

"Why, he'll look exactly like a parish clerk."

Ha!" said the farmer, "that *is* ugly! You know, I can't bear the sight of a clerk. But it doesn't matter now; if I know it's the devil I'll be able to stand it. Now I feel brave, but he mustn't come too near me."

"Now I will ask my wizard," said Little Claus; and he stepped on the sack and held his ear down.

"What does he say?"

"He says you can go and open the chest that stands in the corner, and you will see the devil tucked away

in it; but you must hold the lid so that he doesn't slip out."

"Will you help me to hold him?" asked the farmer. And he went to the chest where the wife had hidden the real clerk, who sat in there and was so afraid. The farmer opened the lid a little way and peeped in underneath it.

"Ugh!" he cried, and sprang back. "Yes, now I've seen him, and he looked just like our clerk. Oh, that was terrible!"

They had to drink on that, and so they sat and drank until late into the night.

"You must sell me that wizard," said the farmer. "Ask as much as you like for him; I'll give you a whole bushel of money right away."

"No, I can't do that," said Little Claus; "only think how much use I can make of this wizard."

"Oh, I should so much like to have him!" said the farmer; and he went on begging.

"Well," said Little Claus, at last, "as you have been so kind as to give me shelter for the night, I'll let it go at that. You can have the wizard for a bushel of money; but I must have the bushel heaped up."

"You'll get that," said the farmer. "But you must take that chest away with you. I won't keep it in my house an hour. You never can tell, he may be sitting there yet."

Little Claus gave the farmer his sack with the dry hide in it, and got a whole bushel of money, and that heaped up. The farmer also gave him a big wheelbarrow to carry off his money and chest in.

"Good-by!" said Little Claus; and he went off with his money and the big chest, in which the parish clerk was still sitting.

On the other side of the wood was a large, deep river. The water rushed along so rapidly that one could hardly swim against the stream. A fine new bridge had been

built over it. Little Claus stopped at the middle of the bridge, and said quite loud, so that the clerk in the chest could hear it:

"Why, what do I want with this crazy chest? It's as heavy as if there were stones in it. I shall only get tired if I drag it any farther, so I'll throw it in the river; if it floats home to me, all right; and if it doesn't, I don't care very much."

And he took the chest by one handle, and lifted it up a little, as if he were going to throw it in the river.

"No! Don't!" screamed the clerk from inside the chest, "let me out first!"

"Ugh!" said Little Claus, and made believe he was frightened, "he's in there still! I must get him drowned in the river right away."

"Oh, no, no!" screamed the clerk. "I'll give you a whole bushel full of money if you'll let me go."

"Why, that's another thing!" said Little Claus; and he opened the chest.

The clerk crawled quickly out, pushed the empty chest into the water, and went to his house, where Little Claus got a whole bushel full of money. He had already got one from the farmer, and so now he had his whole wheelbarrow loaded with money.

"Well, I got rather a good price for that horse," he said to himself when he had come home to his own room, and was emptying all the money into a heap in the middle of the floor. "It will worry Big Claus when he hears how rich I've got with my one horse; but I won't tell him about it outright."

So he sent a boy to Big Claus to borrow a bushel measure.

"What does he want with that?" thought Big Claus, and he smeared some tar underneath the measure, so that something of whatever was measured should stick to it. And it did; for when he got the measure back, there were three new silver dimes sticking to it.

"What's this?" cried Big Claus; and he ran off at once to Little Claus. "Where did you get all that money from?"

"Oh, that's for the hide of my horse. I sold it last night."

"That was certainly a good price," said Big Claus. And he ran home, took an axe, and killed all his four horses; then he flayed them, and carried their hides to the town.

"Hides! hides! who'll buy hides?" he cried through the streets.

All the shoemakers and tanners came running, and asked how much he wanted for them.

"A bushel of money for each!" said Big Claus.

"Are you crazy?" they said. "Do you think we have money by the bushel?"

"Hides! hides!" he cried again; and to all who asked him what the hides would cost he answered, "A bushel of money."

"He wants to make fools of us," they all said, and the shoemakers took their straps, and the tanners their aprons, and they began to beat Big Claus.

"Hides! hides!" they jeered after him. "Yes, we'll tan your hide for you till you sweat blood. Out of the town with him!" And Big Claus hurried as fast as he could, for he had never yet been thrashed as he was thrashed now.

"Well," said he when he got home, "Little Claus shall pay for this. I'll kill him for that."

Now, at Little Claus's house the old grandmother had died. She had been very mean and unkind to him, but still he was very sorry, and took the dead woman and laid her in his warm bed, to see if she wouldn't come to life again. She was going to lie there all through the night, and he himself would sit in the corner and sleep on a chair; he had often done that before. While he was sitting there at night the door opened, and Big

Claus came in with his axe. He knew where Little Claus's bed stood, went straight up to it, and hit the old grandmother on the head, thinking she was Little Claus.

"Take that," he said, "you won't fool me again." And then he went home.

"That's a bad, wicked fellow, that man," said Little Claus. "He wanted to kill me. It was a good thing for the old woman that she was dead already, or he would have killed her."

And he dressed his grandmother in her Sunday clothes, borrowed a horse of his neighbor, harnessed it to a carriage, and put the old grandmother on the back seat, so that she couldn't fall out when he drove fast. And so they rolled on through the wood. When the sun rose they were in front of an inn; there Little Claus pulled up, and went in to get something to eat.

The host had very, very much money; he was also a very good man, but he got angry as easily as if he had pepper and tobacco in him.

"Good morning," said he to Little Claus. "You've put on your Sunday clothes early to-day."

"Yes," answered Little Claus; "I'm going to town with my old grandmother; she's sitting there in the carriage outside. I can't bring her into the room—will you give her a glass of mead? But you must speak rather loud, for she doesn't hear well."

"Yes, I'll do that," said the host. And he poured out a big glass of mead, and went out with it to the dead grandmother, who had been placed upright in the carriage.

"Here's a glass of mead from your son," said the host. But the dead woman didn't say a word, of course, but sat quite still. "Can't you hear?" shouted the host, as loud as he could, "here is a glass of mead from your son!"

Once more he called out the same thing, and once again, but as she still didn't stir, he got angry and

threw the glass in her face, so that the mead ran down over her nose, and she tumbled backwards into the car, for she had only been set upright, and not bound fast.

"Hello!" shouted Little Claus, jumping out from the door, and seizing the host by the throat, "you've killed my grandmother! Just look now, there's a big hole in her forehead."

"Oh, it was an accident!" cried the host, wringing his hands. "It was all because of my hot temper. Dear Little Claus, I'll give you a bushel of money, and have your grandmother buried as if she were my own; only keep quiet, or I shall have my head cut off, and that would be so horrid!"

So Little Claus got a whole bushel of money, and the host buried the old grandmother as if she had been his own. And when Little Claus came home again with all this money, he at once sent his boy to Big Claus to ask to borrow a bushel measure.

"What's that?" said Big Claus. "Didn't I kill him? I must go myself and see to this." And so he went over himself with the bushel to Little Claus.

"Why, where did you get all that money from?" he asked; and he opened his eyes wide when he saw all that had been piled up.

"You killed my grandmother, and not me," answered Little Claus, "and I've sold her now, and got a whole bushel of money for her."

"That was certainly good money," said Big Claus; and he hastened home, took an axe, and killed his own grandmother at once. Then he put her on a carriage, and drove off to the town with her, to where the druggist lived, and asked him if he would buy a dead person.

"Who is it, and where did you get him from?" asked the druggist.

"It's my grandmother," answered Big Claus. "I've killed her to get a bushel of money for her."

"Heaven save us!" cried the druggist, "you're raving!

Don't say such things, or you may lose your head." And then he put it right up to him what a terrible thing he had done, and what a bad man he was, and that he ought to be punished. And Big Claus was so frightened that he jumped out of the drugstore straight into his carriage, whipped the horses, and rushed home. But the druggist and all the people thought he was crazy, and so they let him drive wherever he would.

"I'll make you pay for that!" said Big Claus, when he was back on the highroad, "yes, I'll pay you back, Little Claus!" And when he got home he took the biggest sack he could find, and went over to Little Claus and said, "Now, you've fooled me again! First I killed my horses, and then my old grandmother! That's all your fault; but you'll never fool me any more." And he seized Little Claus round the body, and thrust him into the sack, and took him on his back, and shouted to him, "Now I'm going out to drown you."

He had to go a long way before he came to the river, and Little Claus wasn't any too light. The road led him by a church, the organ was playing, and the people were singing beautifully! Then Big Claus put down his sack, with Little Claus in it, close to the church door, and thought it might not be such a bad idea to go in and listen to a hymn before he went on; for Little Claus could not get out, and all the people were in church; and so he went in.

"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" sighed Little Claus in the sack. And he turned and twisted, but he couldn't possibly loosen the cord. Then an old drover came by with snow-white hair, and a big stick in his hand; he was driving a whole herd of cows and bulls before him, and they stumbled against the sack in which Little Claus was sitting, so that it was upset.

"Oh, dear!" sighed Little Claus, "I'm so young yet, and must already go to heaven!"

"And I, poor fellow," said the drover, "am so old and can't get there yet!"

"Open the sack," cried Little Claus, "creep into it instead of me, and you will get to heaven right away."

"I'd love to do that," said the drover, and he untied the sack for Little Claus who jumped out at once.

"But will you look after the cattle?" said the old man; and he crawled into the sack, which Little Claus tied up, and went his way with all the cows and bulls.

Soon afterward Big Claus came out of the church. He took the sack on his shoulders again, although it seemed to him as if the sack had become lighter; for the old drover was only half as heavy as Little Claus.

"How light he is to carry now! That must be because I heard a hymn."

So he went to the river, which was deep and broad, threw the sack with the old drover in it into the water, and called after him, because, you see, he thought it was Little Claus, "Take that! You're not going to fool me any more!"

Then he went home; but when he came to a place where there was a crossroad, he met Little Claus driving all his cattle.

"What's this?" cried Big Claus. "Didn't I drown you?"

"Yes," said Little Claus, "sure enough, you threw me into the river less than half an hour ago."

"But where did you get all that fine cattle from?" asked Big Claus.

"They are sea cattle," said Little Claus. "I'll tell you the whole story,—and thank you, too, for drowning me, for now I'm on top. I am really rich! How frightened I was when I lay in the sack, and the wind whistled about my ears when you threw me down from the bridge into the cold water! I sank to the bottom right away; but I didn't hurt myself, for the finest soft grass grows down there. I fell on that; and the sack was opened at

once, and the loveliest maiden, with snow-white garments and a green wreath on her wet hair, took me by the hand, and said, 'Is that you, Little Claus? Here are some cattle for you to begin with. A mile farther along the road there is a whole herd more, which I will give to you.' And now I saw that the river formed a great highway for the people of the sea. Down in its bed they walked and drove right from the sea, and straight into the land to where the river ends. The prettiest flowers grew there and the freshest grass, and the fishes swimming in the water darted past my head just as the birds do here in the air. What nice people there were, and what fine cattle grazing by hedges and in ditches!"

"But why did you come back up to us right away?" asked Big Claus. "I wouldn't have done that if it's so nice down there."

"Why," said Little Claus, "that's exactly where I was wise. You've just heard me tell you that the sea girl said, 'A mile farther along the road'—and by the road she meant the river, for she can't go anywhere else—there is still a whole herd of cattle waiting for me. But I know what turns the stream takes—sometimes this way, sometimes that; that makes a long way to go round: no, I can cut it short by coming here to the land, and driving across the fields toward the river again. In this way I save myself almost half a mile, and get all the quicker to my sea cattle!"

"Oh, you are a lucky man!" said Big Claus. "Do you think I'd get some sea cattle, too, if I went down to the bottom of the river?"

"Yes, of course you would!" said Little Claus. "But I can't carry you in the sack as far as the river; you are too heavy for me! But if you will walk there yourself and crawl into the sack, I shall throw you in with the greatest pleasure."

"Thanks!" said Big Claus, "but if I don't get any sea

cattle when I am down there, I'll lick you, you can bet!"

"Oh, no, don't be so mean!"

And so they went together to the river. When the cattle, which were thirsty, saw the water, they ran as fast as they could to get a drink.

"Look how they hurry!" cried Little Claus. "They are longing to get back to the bottom."

"Yes, but help me first!" said Big Claus, "or you'll get a licking."

And so he crawled into the large sack, which had been laid across the back of one of the bulls.

"Put a stone in, or I'm afraid I shan't sink," said Big Claus.

"That will be all right," said Little Claus, but still he put a big stone in the sack, tied the rope tightly, and pushed. *Plump!* There lay Big Claus in the river, and sank at once to the bottom.

"I'm afraid he won't find the cattle!" said Little Claus; and then he drove homeward with what he had.

E.P.

The Princess on the Pea

THERE was once a prince who wanted to marry a princess; but she had to be a *real* princess. So he traveled all through the whole world to find a real one, but everywhere there was something the matter. There were plenty of princesses, but whether they were *real* princesses he couldn't quite make out: there was always something that didn't seem real enough. So he came home again, and was very sorry; for he wanted so much to have a real princess.

One evening a terrible storm came on. It lightened and thundered, the rain poured down; it was perfectly dreadful! Then there was a knocking at the town gate, and the old king went out to open it.

It was a princess who stood outside. But, heavens, how the rain and the bad weather had made her look! The water ran down from her hair and her clothes; it ran in at the points of her shoes, and out at the heels; and then she said that she was a real princess.

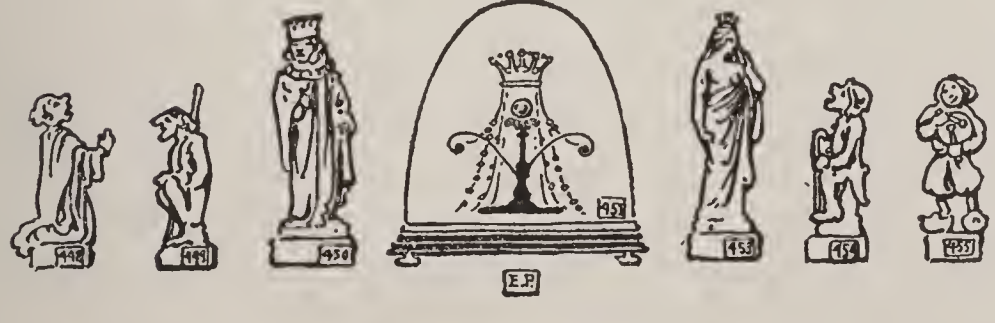
"Well, we'll soon find that out," thought the old queen. But she said nothing, only went into the bedroom, took all the bedclothes off, and put a pea on the bottom of the bedstead; then she took twenty mattresses and laid them on the pea, and then again twenty eider-down beds on the mattresses. On this the princess had to lie all night. In the morning they asked her how she had slept.

"O, horribly!" said the princess. "I hardly closed my eyes all night long. Goodness knows what was in my bed. I lay on something hard, so that I am black and blue all over. It is perfectly terrible!"

Now they could see that she was a real princess, because she had felt the pea through the twenty mattresses and the twenty eider-down beds. Nobody but a real princess could be so tender.

So the prince married her, because now he knew that he had a real princess; and the pea was put in the art museum, and it is there now, unless somebody has taken it.

Well that was a real story.



Little Ida's Flowers

"MY poor flowers are quite dead!" said little Ida. "They were so pretty yesterday evening, and now all the leaves hang and are withered. Why do they do that?" she asked the student, who sat on the sofa; for she liked him very much.

He knew the most wonderful stories, and he cut out the funniest pictures—hearts, with little ladies in them who danced, flowers, and big castles with doors that opened; he was a gay student. "Why do the flowers look so sick to-day?" she asked again, and showed him a whole bouquet, which was all withered.

"Do you know what's the matter with them?" said the student. "The flowers have been at a ball last night, and that's why they hang their heads."

"But you know that flowers can't dance!" said little Ida.

"Oh, yes," said the student, "when it gets dark, and we are asleep, they hop around and have a good time. Almost every single night they have a ball."

"Can't children go to this ball?"

"Yes," said the student, "very little daisies, and lilies of the valley."

"Where do the prettiest flowers dance?" asked little Ida.

"Haven't you often been outside the town gate, by the big castle, where the king lives in summer, and where the beautiful garden is, with all the flowers? You have seen the swans, who swim up to you when you want to give them bread crumbs? There are regular balls there, I tell you."

"I was out there in the garden yesterday, with my mother," said Ida, "but all the leaves were off the trees, and there was not one flower left. Where are they? In the summer I saw so many."

"They are inside, in the castle," said the student. "You see, as soon as the king and all the court go to town, the flowers run right away from the garden into the castle, and have fun. You ought to see it. The two most beautiful roses seat themselves on the throne, and then they are king and queen; all the red coxcombs range themselves on either side, and stand and bow; they are the chamberlains. Then all the daintiest flowers come, and there is a great ball. The blue violets stand for little naval cadets: they dance with hyacinths and crocuses, whom they call young ladies; the tulips and the great tiger lilies are old ladies who keep watch that the dancing is prettily done, and that everything is proper."

"But," asked little Ida, "does nobody do anything to the flowers, for dancing in the king's castle?"

"There is nobody who really knows about it," an-

swered the student. "Sometimes at night, certainly, the old keeper of the castle comes who has to watch there, and he has a great bunch of keys with him; but as soon as the flowers hear the keys rattle they are very quiet, hide behind the long curtains, and only poke their heads out. Then the old keeper says, 'I can smell some flowers in here,' but he can't see them."

"That's funny!" said little Ida, and clapped her hands. "But don't you think I could see the flowers?"

"Yes," said the student; "just remember to peep through the window when you go out there again; then you will see them. That is what I did to-day. There was a long yellow lily lying on the sofa and stretching herself. She had an idea she was a court lady."

"Can the flowers from the Botanical Gardens get there? Can they come such a long way?"

"Yes, certainly," said the student, "if they want to they can fly. Haven't you seen the beautiful butterflies, red, yellow, and white? They look almost like flowers; and that is exactly what they used to be. They jumped off their stalks high in the air, and beat it with their leaves, as if the leaves were little wings, and then they flew. And because they behaved themselves well, they were allowed to fly around in the daytime too, and didn't have to go home again and to sit still on their stalks; and in that way the leaves turned into real wings. You've seen that yourself. It might be, though, that the flowers in the Botanical Garden have never been in the king's castle, or that they don't know about the good times there at night. And I'll tell you something now that will surprise the botanical professor, who lives close by here. You know him, don't you? When you come into his garden, you must tell one of the flowers that there is a big ball out at the castle. Then that flower will tell it to all the rest, and then they will fly away; then if the professor comes out in the garden,

there won't be a single flower left, and he won't be able to understand where they have gone to."

"But how can one flower tell it to another? You know flowers can't speak."

"No, that's perfectly true," said the student, "but they can play pantomime. Haven't you seen that when the wind blows a little, the flowers nod and move all their green leaves? That's just as plain as if they were talking."

"Can the professor understand pantomime?" asked Ida.

"Yes, certainly. One morning he came into his garden, and saw a large stinging nettle standing there, making pantomime at a beautiful red carnation with its leaves. It was saying, 'You are so pretty, and I am so very fond of you.' But the professor doesn't like that kind of thing, and he slapped the stinging nettle on its leaves at once, for those are its fingers; but he stung himself, and since that time he never dares to touch a stinging nettle."

"That was funny," cried little Ida; and she laughed.

"How can any one put such notions into a child's head?" said the tedious privy councillor, who had come to pay a visit, and was sitting on the sofa. He didn't like the student at all, and always grumbled when he saw him cutting out those queer, funny pictures—sometimes a man hanging on a gibbet and holding a heart in his hand, to show that he stole hearts; sometimes an old witch riding on a broom, and carrying her husband on her nose. The councillor couldn't stand this, and then he said, just as he did now, "How can any one put such notions into a child's head? What stupid ideas!"

But little Ida thought that what the student told about her flowers was so funny; and she thought ever so much about it. The flowers hung their heads, for they were tired because they had danced all night; they were certainly ill. Then she went with them to all her other

toys, which stood on a pretty little table, and the whole drawer was full of fine things. In the doll's bed lay her doll Sophia, asleep; but little Ida said to her:

"You'll really have to get up, Sophia, and be satisfied to lie in the drawer to-night. The poor flowers are ill, and they must lie in your bed; perhaps they will get well then."

And she took the doll out; but it looked cross, and did not say a single word; for it was angry because it couldn't keep its own bed.

Then Ida laid the flowers in the doll's bed, pulled the little coverlet up all around them, and said they were to lie still and be good, and she would make them some tea, so that they might get well again, and be able to get up to-morrow. And she pulled the curtains closely round the little bed, so that the sun wouldn't shine in their eyes. The whole evening through she couldn't help thinking of what the student had told her. And when she was going to bed herself, she first had to look behind the window curtains where her mother's beautiful flowers stood—both hyacinths and tulips; and then she whispered very softly, "I know you're going to the ball to-night!" But the flowers acted as if they didn't understand anything and didn't move a leaf; but still little Ida knew what she knew.

When she was in bed she lay for a long time thinking how nice it would be to see the beautiful flowers dancing out there in the king's castle. "I wonder if my flowers have really been there?" And then she fell asleep. In the night she woke up again: she had been dreaming of the flowers, and about the student whom the councillor scolded and said he was fooling her. It was very quiet in the bedroom where Ida lay; the night lamp burned on the table, and her father and mother were asleep.

"I wonder if my flowers are still lying in Sophia's bed?" she thought to herself. "How I should like to know that!" She raised herself a little, and looked at

B

the door, which stood ajar; in there lay the flowers and all her playthings. She listened, and then it seemed to her as if she heard some one playing on the piano in the next room, but quite softly and prettily, as she had never heard it before.

"I'm sure all the flowers are dancing in there now!" she thought. "Oh, heavens, how I should like to see it!" But she didn't dare to get up, for she would have waked up her father and mother.

"If they would only come in here!" she thought. But the flowers did not come, and the music kept on playing so beautifully; it was much too lovely, she couldn't help slipping out of her little bed; she went quietly to the door, and peeked into the room. And oh, what a funny sight she saw!

There was no night lamp burning, but still it was quite light; the moon shone through the window into the middle of the floor; it was almost like day. All the hyacinths and tulips stood in two long rows on the floor; there was none at all left at the window. There stood the empty flowerpots. On the floor all the flowers were dancing very gracefully round each other, making a perfect chain, and holding each other by the long green leaves as they swung round. But at the piano sat a big yellow lily, which little Ida had certainly seen in summer, for she remembered how the student had said, "It looks just like Miss Lina," but then everybody had laughed at him; but now it seemed really to little Ida as if the long yellow flower looked like the lady; and it had just her manners in playing—sometimes bending its long yellow face to one side, sometimes to the other, and nodding in tune to the lovely music! No one noticed little Ida. Then she saw a great blue crocus hop into the middle of the table, where the toys stood, and go to the doll's bed and pull the curtains aside; there lay the sick flowers, but they got up right away, and nodded to the others, to say that they wanted to dance too. The

old chimney-sweep doll, whose under lip was broken off, stood up and bowed to the pretty flowers; these did not look at all ill now; they jumped down among the others, and had such a good time.

Then it seemed as if something fell down from the table. Ida looked that way. It was the carnival birch rod which was jumping down! it had an idea that it, too, belonged to the flowers. At any rate it was very neat; and a little wax doll, with just such a broad hat on its head as the councillor wore, sat on it. The birch rod hopped about among the flowers on its three red legs, and stamped quite loud, for it was dancing the mazurka; and the other flowers couldn't dance that, because they were too light, and couldn't stamp.

The wax doll on the birch rod all at once got big and long, whirled around on its paper flowers, and said, "How can one put such things in a child's head? What stupid ideas!" and then the wax doll was exactly like the councillor with the broad hat, and looked just as yellow and cross as he. But the paper flowers hit him on his thin legs, and then he shrank up again, and became a tiny little wax doll. It was so funny to look at, and little Ida couldn't help laughing. The birch rod went on dancing, and the councillor had to dance too; no matter whether he made himself big and long, or stayed like the little yellow wax doll with the broad black hat. Then the other flowers put in a good word for him, especially those who had been lying in the doll's bed, and then the birch rod stopped. At the same moment there was a loud knocking in the drawer, where Ida's doll, Sophia, lay with many other toys. The chimney sweep ran to the edge of the table, lay flat down on

his stomach, and began to pull the drawer out a little. Then Sophia sat up, and looked around very surprised.

"There must be a ball here," she said, "why didn't somebody tell me?"

"Will you dance with me?" asked the chimney sweep.

"You'd be a nice sort of fellow to dance with!" she said, and turned her back on him.

Then she sat down on the drawer, and thought that one of the flowers would come and ask her; but not one of them came. Then she coughed, "Hem! hem! hem!" but nobody came anyway. The chimney sweep then danced all alone, and that wasn't so bad either!

As none of the flowers seemed to notice Sophia, she let herself fall down from the drawer right on the floor, with a big noise. The flowers now all came running up, to ask her if she had hurt herself; and they were all very polite to her, especially the flowers that had been lying in her bed. But she hadn't hurt herself at all; and Ida's flowers all thanked her for the nice bed, and liked her so much, took her into the middle of the floor, where the moon shone in, and danced with her; and all the other flowers made a circle around her. Now Sophia was pleased, and said they might keep her bed; she didn't at all mind lying in the drawer.

But the flowers said, "We thank you very much, but we can't live as long as that. To-morrow we shall be quite dead. But tell little Ida she is to bury us out in the garden, where the canary lies; then we shall grow up again in summer, and be far more beautiful."

"No, you must not die," said Sophia; and she kissed the flowers.

At that moment the door opened, and a whole crowd

of lovely flowers came dancing in. Ida couldn't imagine where they had come from; they were certainly all the flowers from the king's castle. First of all came two lovely roses, and they had little gold crowns on; they were a king and a queen. Then came the prettiest stocks and carnations; and they bowed in all directions. They had music with them. Large poppies and peonies blew on pea pods till they were quite red in the face. The bluebells and the little white snowdrops tinkled just as if they had bells on. That was wonderful music! Then came ever so many other flowers, and they all danced together; the blue violets and the pink primroses, the daisies and the lilies of the valley. And all the flowers kissed one another; it was a pretty sight!

At last the flowers wished one another good night; then little Ida, too, crept to bed, where she dreamed of all she had seen.

When she got up next morning, she went quickly to the little table, to see if the flowers were still there. She drew aside the curtains of the little bed; there they all lay, but they were quite faded, much more than yesterday. Sophia was lying in the drawer where Ida had laid her; she looked very sleepy.

"Do you remember what you had to say to me?" asked little Ida.

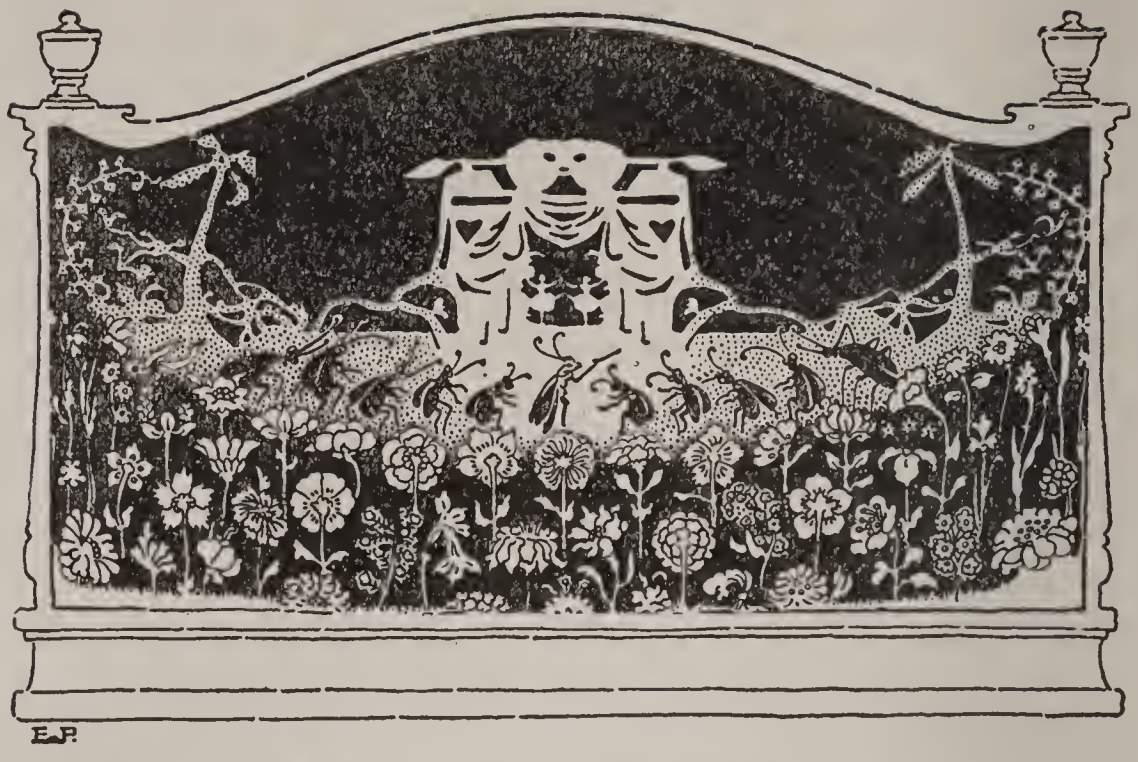
But Sophia looked quite stupid, and did not say a single word.

"You are not at all good!" said Ida. "And yet they all danced with you."

Then she took a little paper box, on which were painted beautiful birds, and opened it, and laid the dead flowers in it.

"This is going to be your pretty coffin," she said, "and when my Norwegian cousins come to visit me by and by, they shall help me to bury you outside in the garden, so that you will grow again in summer, and become more beautiful than ever."

The Norwegian cousins were two fine boys. Their names were Jonas and Adolph; their father had given them two new crossbows, and they had brought these with them to show to Ida. She told them about the poor flowers who had died, and then they were allowed to bury them. The two boys went first, with their crossbows on their shoulders, and little Ida followed with the dead flowers in the pretty box. Out in the garden a little grave was dug. Ida first kissed the flowers, and then laid them in the earth in the box, and Adolph and Jonas shot their crossbows over the grave, for they had no guns nor cannons.



Tommelisa

ONCE there was a woman who wanted so much to have a tiny, little child, but she didn't know at all where she could get one. So she went to an old witch, and said:

"I do so very much want a little child! Couldn't you tell me where I could possibly get one?"

"Oh! we'll fix that all right," said the witch. "Here is a barleycorn: it isn't at all the kind which grows in the farmer's field, and which the chickens get to eat. Put it into a flowerpot, and then you'll see something."

"Thank you," said the woman; and she gave the witch a quarter.

Then she went home and planted the barleycorn, and at once a large, lovely flower grew up, which looked like a tulip; but the leaves were tightly closed, as though it were still a bud.

"It is a pretty flower," said the woman; and she

kissed its beautiful yellow and red leaves. But just as she kissed it the flower opened with a loud crack. It was a real tulip, as one could now see; but in the middle of the flower on the green chair sat a tiny little girl, so delicate and charming. She was only an inch tall [an "inch" is "Tomme" in Danish] so she was called Tommelisa.

For her cradle she had a beautifully varnished walnut shell, blue violet leaves were her mattresses, with a rose-leaf for a coverlet. There she slept at night; but in the daytime she played on the table, where the woman had put a plate with a wreath of flowers around it, whose stalks stood in water; on the water floated a large tulip leaf, and on this Tommelisa could sit, and row from one side of the plate to the other, with two white horsehairs for oars. That was a lovely sight! She could sing, too, and oh, so gently and sweetly, that nothing like it had ever been heard before.

One night as she lay in her pretty bed, a horrid old Toad came hopping in at the window, in which one pane was broken. The Toad was very ugly, big, and wet; she hopped straight down on the table, where Tommelisa lay sleeping under the red rose leaf.

"She would make a lovely wife for my son," said the Toad; and she took the walnut shell in which Tommelisa lay asleep, and hopped with it through the window into the garden.

Down there ran a big broad brook; but the edge of it was swampy and muddy, and here the Toad lived with her son. Ugh! he was ugly and nasty and looked just like his mother. "Croak! croak! brek-kek-kex!" that was all he could say when he saw the pretty little girl in the walnut shell.

"Don't talk so loud, or she'll wake up," said the old Toad. "She might run away from us yet, for she is as light as a bit of swan's-down. We will put her out in the brook on one of the broad water-lily leaves.

That will be just like an island for her, she is so small and light. Then she can't get away, while we put the parlor under the mud in order, where you are to live and keep house together."

Out in the brook grew many water lilies with broad green leaves, which looked as if they were floating on the water. The leaf which lay farthest out was also the biggest of all, and to that the old Toad swam out and laid the walnut shell on it with Tommelisa. The poor little thing woke early in the morning, and when she saw where she was, she began to cry so bitterly; for there was water on every side of the large green leaf, and she could not get to land at all. The old Toad sat down there in the mud, and decorated her room with sedges and yellow water lilies—it was going to be very neat for the new daughter-in-law; then she swam out, with her ugly son, to the leaf on which Tommelisa was. They wanted to take her pretty bed, which was to be put in the bridal chamber before she went in there herself. The old Toad bowed low before her in the water, and said:

"Here is my son; he is going to be your husband, and you're going to have such a nice time together in the mud."

"Croak! croak! brek-kek-kex!" that was all the son could say.

Then they took the elegant little bed, and swam away with it; but Tommelisa sat all alone on the green leaf and wept, for she didn't want to live with the nasty Toad and have her ugly son for a husband. The little fishes who were swimming in the water below had seen the Toad, of course, and had also heard what she said; therefore they stuck their heads up, for they wanted to see the little girl. As soon as they saw her they thought she was charming, and it hurt them so that she had to go down to the awful Toad. No, that must never happen! They flocked together in the

water around the green stalk which held the leaf on which she stood, and with their teeth they gnawed away the stalk, and so the leaf floated down the stream; and away went Tommelisa, far away, where the Toad couldn't come.

Tommelisa sailed by many places, and the little birds in the bushes saw her, and said, "What a pretty little lady!" The leaf swam away with her, farther and farther; that was how Tommelisa went abroad.

A lovely little white butterfly kept fluttering around her, and at last sat down on the leaf, because he liked Tommelisa very much, and she was so delighted, for now the Toad couldn't reach her; and it was so beautiful where she was sailing along—the sun shone on the water, it was just like shining gold. She took her girdle and bound one end of it round the butterfly, fastening the other end of the ribbon to the leaf. The leaf now glided onward much faster, and Tommelisa too, for she was standing on the leaf, of course.

Just at that moment a big Cockchafer came flying; and he saw her, and at once put his claws round her slender waist, and flew with her up into a tree. The green leaf went swimming down the brook, and the butterfly with it; for he was fastened to the leaf, and could not get away from it.

Heavens! how frightened poor Tommelisa was when the Cockchafer flew with her up into the tree! But most of all she was sorry for the pretty white butterfly whom she had tied to the leaf, for, if he could not free himself from it, he would have to starve to death. But the Cockchafer didn't worry about that. He seated himself with her on the biggest green leaf of the tree, gave her the sweet part of flowers to eat, and said that she was very pretty, though she didn't look at all like a cockchafer. Afterwards all the other cockchafers who lived in the tree came to pay a visit;

they looked at Tommelisa, and the lady cockchafers shrugged their feelers and said:

"Why, she has only two legs!—that looks awful."

"She has no feelers!" they said.

"Her waist is quite slender—pfui! she looks like a human creature—how ugly she is!" said all the lady cockchafers; and still Tommelisa was very pretty. Even the Cockchafer who carried her off thought so; but when all the others said she was ugly, he believed it at last, too, and wouldn't have her at all—she might go wherever she liked. Then they flew down with her from the tree, and set her on a daisy, and she wept, because she was so ugly that the cockchafers wouldn't have her; and yet she was the loveliest thing one could imagine, as delicate and bright as the most beautiful rose leaf.

The whole summer through poor Tommelisa lived quite alone in the large wood. She wove herself a bed out of blades of grass, and hung it up under a large burdock leaf, so that it couldn't rain on her; she plucked the honey out of the flowers for food, and drank of the dew which stood every morning on the leaves. In this way summer and autumn passed; but now winter came, the cold long winter. All the birds who had sung so sweetly to her flew away; trees and flowers shed their leaves; the big burdock leaf under which she had lived shriveled up, and turned into a yellow withered stalk; and she was dreadfully cold, for her clothes were torn, and she herself was so frail and tiny—poor Tommelisa! she would freeze to death. It began to snow, and every snowflake that fell on her was like a whole shovel full thrown on us, for we are tall, and she was only an inch long. Then she wrapped herself in a dry leaf, but that couldn't warm her—she shivered with cold.

Close to the wood into which she had now come lay a big cornfield, but the corn was gone long ago; only

the naked dry stubble stood up out of the frozen ground. These were just like a whole forest for her to walk through; and, oh! how she trembled with cold. Then she came to the door of the Field Mouse. This was a little hole under the stubble. There the Field Mouse lived, warm and comfortable, and had a whole room full of corn—a wonderful kitchen and pantry. Poor Tommelisa stood at the door just like a poor beggar girl, and begged for a little piece of barleycorn, for she hadn't had the smallest morsel to eat for the last two days.

"You poor little creature," said the Field Mouse—for after all she was a good old Field Mouse—"you come into my warm room and eat with me."

As she was pleased with Tommelisa, she said, "If you like you may stay with me through the winter, but you must keep my room clean and neat, and tell me stories, for I am very fond of them."

And Tommelisa did what the kind old Field Mouse told her to, and had a very good time.

"Pretty soon we are going to have company," said the Field Mouse. "My neighbor is in the habit of visiting me once a week. He is even better off than I am, has large rooms, and he wears a lovely, black, velvety fur coat. If you could only get him for your husband you would be well provided for; but he can't see at all. You must tell him the very prettiest stories you know."

But Tommelisa didn't care about this; she didn't want the neighbor at all, for he was a Mole. He came visiting in his black velvet fur coat. The Field Mouse told how rich and how learned he was, and how his house was more than twenty times larger than hers; and he did know a great deal, but he disliked the sun and the beautiful flowers, and said horrid things about them, for he had never seen them.

Tommelisa had to sing, and she sang, "Cockchafer,

fly away," and "The Monk walks in the meadow." Then the Mole fell in love with her, because of her delicious voice; but he said nothing, for he was a slow man.

A short time before, he had dug a long passage through the earth from his own house to theirs; and Tommelisa and the Field Mouse were allowed to walk in this passage whenever they liked. But he begged them not to be afraid of the dead bird which was lying in the passage. It was a real bird, with feathers and a beak. It certainly must have died only a short time before, when the winter began, and was now buried just where the Mole had made his passage.

The Mole took a piece of rotten wood in his mouth, for that glimmers like fire in the dark; and then he went first and lighted them through the long dark passage. When they came where the dead bird lay, the Mole put his broad nose against the ceiling and pushed the earth so that a big hole was made, through which the daylight could shine down. In the middle of the floor lay a dead Swallow, his beautiful wings pressed close against his sides, and his head and feet drawn in under his feathers: the poor bird had certainly died of cold. Tommelisa was very sorry for him; she was very fond of all the little birds, they had sung and twittered so prettily for her through the summer; but the Mole gave him a push with his short legs, and said, "Now he doesn't squeak any more. It must be awful to be born a little bird. I'm thankful that none of my children can be that; such a bird hasn't anything except his 'tweet, tweet,' and has to starve in the winter!"

"Well, you're a sensible man, and you've a right to say that," said the Field Mouse. "What use is all that twitter to a bird when the winter comes? He must starve and freeze. But that's something grand, too, I suppose."

Tommelisa said nothing; but when the two others turned their backs on the bird, she bent down, put the

feathers aside which covered his head, and kissed him on his closed eyes.

"Perhaps it was he who sang so prettily to me in the summer," she thought. "How much pleasure he gave me, the dear lovely bird!"

The Mole now closed up the hole through which the daylight shone in, and took the ladies home. But at night Tommelisa could not sleep at all; so she got up out of her bed, wove a large beautiful rug of hay, and she carried this down and spread it over the dead bird, and laid soft cotton, which she had found in the Field Mouse's room, at the bird's sides, so that he might lie warm in the cold ground.

"Good-by, you pretty little bird!" said she. "Good-by! and thank you for your beautiful song in the summer, when all the trees were green, and the sun shone down so warmly on us." And then she laid her head on the bird's breast, but at once was greatly startled, for it felt as if something were beating inside there. That was the bird's heart. The bird was not dead; he was only lying there stiff with cold; and now he had been warmed, and came to life again.

In autumn all the swallows fly away to warm countries, but if one happens to be late, it gets so cold that it falls down as if dead, and lies where it falls, and then the cold snow covers it.

Tommelisa fairly trembled, she was so scared; for the bird was large, very large, compared with her, who was only an inch in height. But she took courage, laid the cotton closer round the poor bird, and brought a leaf of mint that she had used as her own coverlet, and laid it over the bird's head.

The next night she tiptoed out to him again—and now he was alive, but quite weak; he could only open his eyes for a moment, and look at Tommelisa, who stood before him with a bit of rotten wood in her hand, for she had no other lantern.

"I thank you, you pretty little child," said the sick Swallow; "you made me feel much warmer. Soon I shall get my strength back again, and then I can fly out in the warm sunshine."

"Oh," she said, "it is so cold outside. It is snowing and freezing. Stay in your warm bed, and I will nurse you."

Then she brought the Swallow water in the petal of a flower; and the Swallow drank, and told her how he had scratched one of his wings on a thorn, and so hadn't been able to fly as fast as the other swallows, when they flew away, far away, to the warm countries. So at last he had fallen to the ground, but he couldn't remember anything else, and did not know at all how he had come where she had found him.

He stayed there then the whole winter, and Tommelisa was very good to him and liked him so much. Neither the Field Mouse nor the Mole heard anything about it, for they did not like the poor Swallow, who hadn't any money. When the spring came, and the sun warmed the earth, the Swallow said good-by to Tommelisa, and she opened the hole which the Mole had made in the ceiling. The sun shone beautifully on them, and the Swallow asked if Tommelisa would go with him; she could sit on his back, and they would fly far away into the green woods. But Tommelisa knew that the old Field Mouse would be sorry if she left her.

"No, I can't do it!" said Tommelisa.

"Good-by, good-by, you kind, pretty girl!" said the Swallow; and he flew out in the sunshine. Tommelisa looked after him, and the tears came into her eyes, for she was so fond of the poor Swallow.

"Tweet, tweet! tweet, tweet!" sang the bird, and flew into the green forest. Tommelisa felt very sad. She wasn't allowed to walk in the warm sunshine. The corn which was sown in the field over the house of the Field

Mouse grew up high in the air; it was quite a thick wood for the poor girl, who was only an inch tall.

"Now you must work at your wedding things this summer," said the Field Mouse to her; for her neighbor, the tedious Mole with the velvet coat, had proposed to her. "You shall have both woolen and linen clothes, things to sit on and things to lie on, when you're the wife of the Mole."

Tommelisa had to turn the spindle, and the Field Mouse hired four spiders to spin and weave for her day and night. Every evening the Mole paid her a visit; and he was always saying that when the summer should draw to a close, the sun wouldn't shine nearly so hot; now it was burning the earth almost as hard as a stone. Yes, when the summer was over, then he would celebrate his wedding with Tommelisa. But she wasn't pleased at all, for she didn't like the tiresome Mole. Every morning when the sun rose, and every evening when it went down, she tiptoed out at the door; and when the wind blew the corn ears apart, so that she could see the blue sky, she thought how bright and beautiful it was out here, and wished so much to see her dear Swallow again. But the Swallow did not come back; he must be flying far away in the pretty green woods. When autumn came on, Tommelisa had all her weddings things ready.

"In four weeks you shall be married," said the Field Mouse to her.

But Tommelisa cried and said she would not have the dreary Mole.

"Nonsense," said the Field Mouse, "don't be stubborn now, or I will bite you with my white tooth. You couldn't ask for a better husband; the queen herself couldn't match his black velvet fur coat; and his kitchen and cellar are full. You'd better thank Heaven for him!"

Now the wedding was to be held. The Mole had already come to get Tommelisa; she was to live with him

deep under the earth, and never to come out in the warm sunshine, because he didn't like it. The poor little thing was very sad; she was now to say farewell to the beautiful sun, which, after all, she had been allowed by the Field Mouse to see from the threshold of the door.

"Farewell, you bright sun!" she said, and stretched out her arms toward it, and walked a little way out of the house of the Field Mouse, for now the corn had been reaped, and only the dry stubble stood in the fields. "Farewell!" she repeated, and threw her little arms round a small red flower which still bloomed there. "Greet the dear Swallow from me, if you see him again."

"Tweet, tweet! tweet, tweet!" a voice suddenly sounded over her head. She looked up; it was the Swallow, who was just flying by. When he saw Tommelisa he was very glad; and she told him how she hated to have the ugly Mole for her husband, and that she was to live deep under the earth, where the sun never shone. And she couldn't help crying.

"The cold winter is coming now," said the Swallow; "I am going to fly far away to the warm countries. Will you come with me? You can sit on my back, only tie yourself fast with your sash, then we'll fly from the horrid Mole and his dark house—away, far away, over the mountains, to the warm countries, where the sun shines more beautifully than here, where there is always summer, and lovely flowers. You fly with me, sweet little Tommelisa, who saved my life when I lay frozen in the dark cellar."

"Yes, I will come with you!" said Tommelisa, and she climbed up on the bird's back, with her feet on his outspread wings, and bound her girdle fast to one of his strongest feathers; then the Swallow flew up in the air over forests and over seas, high up over the great mountains, where the snow always lies; and Tommelisa felt cold in the chilly air, but then she crept under

the bird's warm feathers, and only put out her little head to see all the loveliness under her.

At last they came to the warm countries. There the sun shone much brighter than here; the sky seemed twice as high; and along roads and hedges grew the most beautiful blue and green grapes; lemons and oranges hung in the woods; the air was fragrant with myrtles and mint and on the roads the loveliest children ran and played with big, bright-colored butterflies. But the Swallow flew still farther, and everything was more and more beautiful. Under splendid green trees by a blue lake stood a palace of dazzling white marble, from olden time. Vines climbed around the tall pillars; at the top were many swallows' nests, and in one of these the Swallow lived who carried Tommelisa.

"Here is my house," said the Swallow. "But if you will pick out for yourself one of the finest flowers which grow down there, then I will put you in it, and there you'll be as happy as the day is long."

"How lovely," she said, and clapped her little hands.

A large marble pillar lay there, which had fallen to the ground and had been broken into three pieces; but between these pieces grew the most beautiful big white flowers. The Swallow flew down with Tommelisa, and set her on one of the broad leaves. But what a surprise she got! A little man was sitting in the midst of the flower, as white and transparent as if he had been made of glass; he wore the daintiest gold crown on his head, and the brightest wings on his shoulders; he himself was not bigger than Tommelisa. He was the angel of the flower. In each of the flowers lived such a little man or woman, but this one was king over them all.

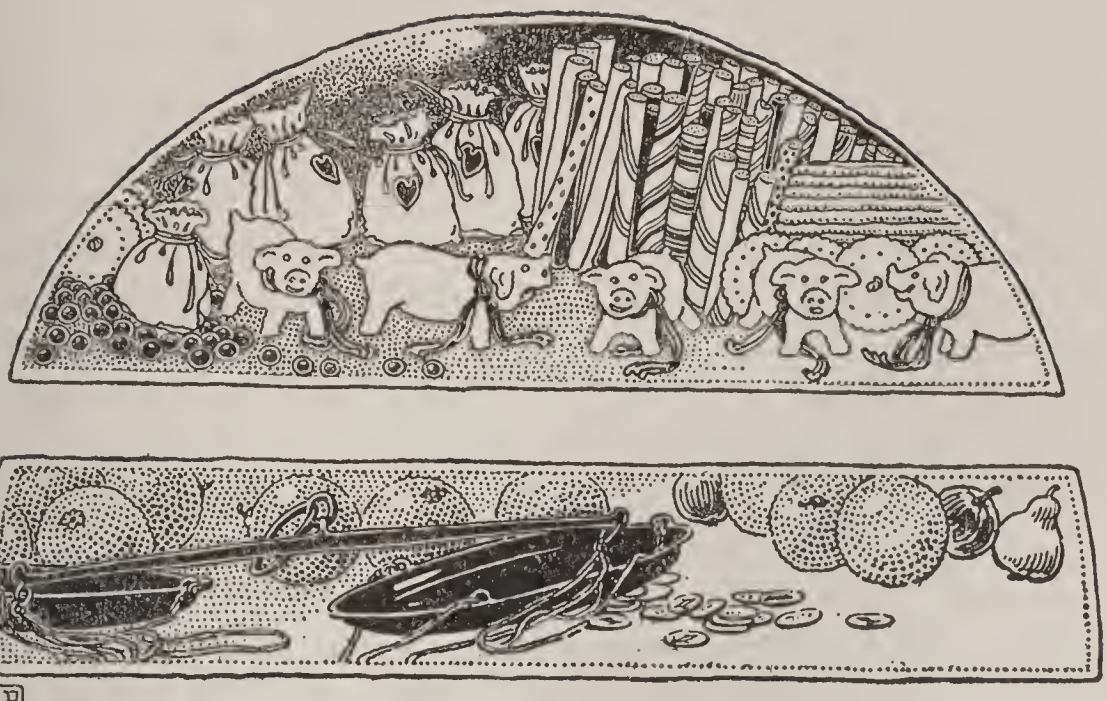
"Heavens! how beautiful he is!" whispered Tommelisa to the Swallow.

The little prince was very much frightened at the

Swallow; for it was like a giant bird to him, who was so small and delicate. But when he saw Tommelisa he was very happy; she was the prettiest girl he had ever seen. And so he took off his golden crown, and put it on her, asked her name and if she would be his wife, and then she should be queen of all the flowers. Well, this was certainly a different husband from the son of the Toad, and the Mole with the black velvet fur. She therefore said "Yes" to the charming prince. And out of every flower came a lady or a gentleman, so pretty that it was a delight: each one brought Tommelisa a present; but the best gift was a pair of beautiful wings which had belonged to a big white fly; these were fastened to Tommelisa's back, and now she could fly from flower to flower. Then there was much happiness; and the Swallow sat above them in his nest, and sang for them as well as he could; but yet in his heart he was sad, for he was so fond of Tommelisa, and would have liked never to part from her.

"You shall not be called Tommelisa!" said the Flower Angel to her, "that is an ugly name, and you are so pretty—we will call you Maia."

"Good-by, good-by!" said the Swallow, and he flew away again from the warm countries, far away back to Denmark. There he had a little nest over the window of the man who can tell fairy tales. To him he sang "Tweet, tweet! tweet, tweet!" and from him we have the whole story.



The Traveling Companion

POOR Johannes was very sad, because his father was very ill, and couldn't get well again. There was no one at all in the little room, except the two of them; the lamp on the table was nearly out, and it was quite late in the evening.

"You have been a good son, Johannes," said the sick father. "The Lord will help you through the world." And he looked at him with mild earnest eyes, drew a deep breath, and died; it was just as if he slept. But Johannes cried; for now he had no one in the world, neither father nor mother, neither sister nor brother. Poor Johannes! He knelt down beside the bed, kissed his dead father's hand, and cried many a salt tear, but at last his eyes closed, and he went to sleep, with his head against the hard bed-board.

Then he dreamed a strange dream; he saw the sun and moon bow to him, and he saw his father again, fresh and well, and he heard his father laugh as he had always laughed when he was really pleased. A beautiful girl, with a golden crown on her long beautiful hair, gave him her hand; and his father said, "See what a bride you have! She is the most beautiful in the whole world!" Then he woke up, and all the beauty was gone. His father was lying dead and cold in the bed, and there was no one at all with them. Poor Johannes!

Next week the dead man was buried. Johannes walked close behind the coffin, and now he couldn't see his good father any more who had loved him so much. He heard how they threw the earth down on the coffin, and looked at the last corner of it; but the next shovel full of earth hid even that; then he felt just as if his heart would burst into pieces, so sorrowful was he. Around him they were singing a psalm; it sounded so beautiful, and the tears came into Johannes' eyes; he cried, and that did him good. The sun shone brightly on the green trees, just as if it wanted to say, "You mustn't be so sad, Johannes. Look how nice and blue the sky is; your father is up there now and he is praying the good God that everything will always be well with you."

"I will always be good," said Johannes, "then I shall go to heaven to my father; and what joy that will be when we see each other again! How much I shall have to tell him then! and he will show me so many things, and teach me so much about all the beautiful things in heaven, just as he taught me here on earth. Oh, what happiness it will be!"

He pictured that to himself so plainly that he smiled, while the tears were still rolling down his cheeks. The little birds sat up in the chestnut trees, and twittered, "Tweet, tweet! tweet, tweet!" They were very gay, though they had been at the burying, but they knew

quite well that the dead man was now in heaven; that he had wings, far larger and more beautiful than theirs; that he was now happy, because he had been a good man on earth, and this was why they were so pleased. Johannes saw how they flew from the green trees out into the world, and he wanted very much to fly with them. But first he cut out a great cross of wood to put on his father's grave; and when he brought it there in the evening the grave was decked with sand and flowers; strangers had done this, for they were all very fond of the good father who was now dead.

Early next morning Johannes packed his little bundle, and hid in his belt his whole inheritance, which consisted of fifty dollars and a few silver coins; with this he was going to wander out into the world. But first he went to the churchyard, to his father's grave, repeated the Lord's Prayer, and said, "Farewell, dear father, I will always be good, and so you may dare to pray to the good God that things may go well with me."

Out in the field where he was walking all the flowers stood fresh and beautiful in the warm sunshine; and they nodded in the wind, just as if they would have said, "Welcome to the country! Isn't it lovely here?" But Johannes turned back once more to look at the old church, in which he had been christened when he was a little child, and where he had been every Sunday with his father at the service, and had sung his hymn; then, high up in one of the openings of the tower, he saw the church-nisse [a good Danish goblin] standing with his little pointed red cap, shading his face with his bent arm, to keep the sun from shining in his eyes. Johannes nodded good-by to him, and the little nisse waved his red cap, laid his hand on his heart, and kissed his hand to Johannes a great many times, to show that he wished him the best of luck and hoped he'd have a wonderful journey.

Johannes was thinking of all the beautiful things he was going to see in the big splendid world; and he went on farther—farther than he had ever been before. He did not know the places at all through which he came, nor the people whom he met. Now he was far away among strangers.

The first night he had to lie on a haystack in the field to sleep, for he had no other bed. But that was very nice, he thought; the king couldn't be better off. There was the whole field, with the brook, the haystack, and the blue sky above it; that was certainly a pretty bedroom. The green grass with the little red and white flowers was the carpet; the elder bushes and the wild rose hedges were bouquets of flowers; and for a wash basin he had the whole brook with the clear fresh water, where the sedges bowed before him and said both "good evening" and "good morning." The moon was a big

night lamp, high up under the blue ceiling, and that lamp would never set fire to the curtains. Johannes could sleep in peace, and he did so, and never woke until the sun rose and all the little birds were singing around, "Good morning! good morning! Aren't you up yet?"

The bells were ringing for church; it was Sunday. The people went to hear the preacher, and Johannes followed them, and sang a hymn and heard the word of God. It seemed to him just as if he was in his own church, where he had been christened and had sung hymns with his father.

Out in the churchyard were many graves, and on some of them the grass grew high. Then he thought of his father's grave, that would have to look like these since he couldn't be there to weed it and decorate it. So he sat down and tore off the grass, set up the wooden crosses which had fallen down, and put back in their places the wreaths which the wind had blown away from the graves; for he thought, "Perhaps some one will do the same to my father's grave, now that I can't."

Outside the churchyard gate stood an old beggar, leaning on his crutch. John gave him the silver coins he had, and then went away, happy and cheerful, into the wide world. Toward evening the weather got terribly bad. He hurried to get under a roof, but it soon got very dark; then at last he came to a little church, which stood all alone on top of a hill.

The door luckily stood ajar, and he slipped in; he would stay here till the storm had gone down.

"I will sit down in a corner here," he said, "I am quite tired and I do need a little rest." Then he sat down, folded his hands, and said his evening prayer; and before he was aware of it he was asleep and dreaming, while it thundered and lightened outside.

When he woke up again it was midnight; but the bad weather had passed by, and the moon shone in on him

through the windows. In the midst of the church stood an open coffin with a dead man in it who had not yet been buried. Johannes wasn't afraid at all, for he had a good conscience; and he knew very well that the dead do not hurt anybody. Only living, bad people do harm. Two such living bad men stood close by the dead man, who had been placed here in the church till he should be buried. They wanted to hurt him; they wouldn't let him rest quietly in his coffin, but were going to throw him outside the church door—the poor dead man!

"Why do you want to do that?" asked Johannes; "that is wrong and wicked. Let him rest, for mercy's sake."

"Nonsense!" said the two horrid men, "he had cheated us. He owed us money and could not pay it, and now he's skipped out and died, and we shan't get a penny! So we're going to get a real revenge; he shall lie like a dog outside the church door!"

"All I have is fifty dollars," said Johannes, "that is my whole inheritance; but I will gladly give it to you, if you will honestly promise me to leave the poor dead man in peace. I'll get along without that money. I am well and strong and the Lord will always help me."

"Well," said the nasty men, "if you want to pay his debts that way, we won't do anything to him, you can be sure of that," and then they took the money Johannes gave them, laughed aloud at his good nature, and went their way. But he laid the corpse out again in the coffin, and folded its hands, said good-by, and went away contentedly through the great forest.

All around, wherever the moon could shine in through the trees, he saw the most charming little elves playing perfectly happily. They didn't let him frighten them; they knew that he was a good, innocent boy; and it is only bad people who never can see the elves. Some of them were no larger than a finger, and had fas-

tened up their long yellow hair with golden combs: they were swinging two and two on the big dewdrops that lay on the leaves and on the high grass; sometimes the drop rolled away, and then they fell down between the long grass stalks, and then there was much laughing and noise among the other little creatures. It was awfully funny! They sang, and John recognized quite plainly the pretty songs which he had learned as a little boy. Large colored spiders, with silver crowns on their heads, had to spin long hanging bridges and palaces from hedge to hedge; and as the fine dewdrops fell on these they looked like shining glass in the clear moonlight. This kept on until the sun rose. Then the little elves crept into the flower buds, and the wind caught at their bridges and palaces, and they flew through the air then, like spiders' webs.

Johannes had just come out of the wood, when a man's strong voice called out behind him, "Hello, comrade! Where are you going?"

"Into the wide world!" he said. "I have neither father nor mother, and am but a poor lad; but God will help me."

"I am going out into the wide world, too," said the strange man, "shall we two keep each other company?"

"Yes, certainly," said Johannes; and so they went on together. Soon they became very fond of each other, for they were both good people. But Johannes saw that the stranger was much more clever than himself. He had traveled nearly around the world, and could talk about almost everything.

The sun already stood high when they sat down under a large tree to eat their breakfast; and just then an old woman came up. Oh, she was very old, and walked all bent over, leaning upon a crutch; on her back she carried a bundle of firewood which she had gathered in the forest. Her apron was tucked up, and Johannes saw that three big bunches of fern and willow twigs

stuck out of it. When she was close to them, her foot slipped; she fell and gave a loud scream, for she had broken her leg, the poor old woman!

Johannes at once wanted to carry her home where she lived; but the stranger opened his knapsack, took out a little jar, and said that he had a salve there

which would make her leg whole and strong right away, so that she could walk home herself, as if she had never broken her leg at all. But for that he wanted her to give him the three bunches of twigs which she carried in her apron.

"That would be a good price!" said the old woman, and she nodded her head in a strange way. She did not like to give away the switches, but it wasn't so pleasant, either, to lie there with a broken leg. So she gave him the switches; and as soon as he had rubbed

the salve on her leg, the old woman got up and walked much better than before—such was the power of this salve. But you couldn't buy that at the drugstore.

"What do you want with those switches?" Johannes asked his traveling companion.

"They make three nice bouquets," he said. "I'm a queer fellow, and that's just the sort of thing I like."

And they went on a good way.

"Look how the sky is becoming overcast," said Johannes, pointing straight before them. "Those are terribly thick clouds."

"No," said his traveling companion, "those are not clouds, they are mountains—the big, lovely mountains, where one can get right up above the clouds, and into the free air. That's fine, I tell you! To-morrow we shall certainly be far out in the world."

But it wasn't so near as it looked; they had to walk for a whole day before they came to the mountains, where the black woods grew straight up toward heaven, and there were stones almost as big as a whole town. It would certainly be hard work to get all the way across them, and for that reason Johannes and his comrade went into an inn to get a good rest and gather strength for the trip next day.

There were a lot of people in the big barroom of the inn, for there was a man here with a doll theater; he had just put it up and the people were sitting around to see the play. Down in front a fat old butcher had taken his seat in the very best place; his big bulldog,—woof, he looked fierce,—sat at his side, and made big eyes, as all the rest were doing.

Now the play began; and it was a very nice play, with a king and a queen in it; they sat on a velvet throne, and had gold crowns on their heads and long trains to their cloaks, for they could afford that. The nicest wooden dolls with glass eyes and big whiskers stood at all the doors, and opened and shut them so that fresh

air might come into the room. It was a very lovely play, and not a bit sad. But just as the queen stood up and was walking across the boards—goodness knows what the bulldog was thinking, but the fat butcher wasn't holding on to him and he made one jump to the stage, and seized the queen round her slender waist so that it cracked. It was perfectly terrible!

The poor man who managed the play was so scared and so sorry about his queen, for she was the daintiest little doll he had, and now the horrid bulldog had bitten off her head. But afterward, when the people went away, the stranger said that he would fix her all right; and then he brought out his little jar, and rubbed the doll with the ointment with which he had cured the poor old woman when she broke her leg. As soon as the doll had been rubbed, she was well again; more than that, she could even move all her limbs by herself; it was no longer necessary to pull her by her string. The doll was like a living person, only that she could not speak. The man who had the little puppet show was so pleased, now he didn't have to hold on to this doll any more. She could dance by herself, and none of the others could do that.

When night came on, and all the people in the inn had gone to bed, there was some one who sighed so fearfully, and went on doing it so long, that they all got up to see who this could be. The man who had shown the play went to his little theater, for it was in there that somebody was sighing. All the wooden dolls were mixed up, the king and all his followers; and it was they who sighed so pitifully, and stared with their big glass eyes; for they wanted so much to be rubbed a little as the queen had been, so that they might be able to move by themselves. The queen went right down on her knees, and held out her beautiful golden crown, as if she begged, "Take this from me, but rub my consort and my courtiers!" Then the poor man

who owned the little theater and the dolls couldn't help crying, for he was really sorry for them. He immediately promised the traveling companion that he would give him all the money he should receive the next evening for the performance if the latter would only anoint four or five of his nicest dolls. But the traveling companion said he wanted only the big sword the man wore by his side; and when he got this he anointed six of the dolls, who immediately began to dance so gracefully that all the girls, the living human girls, who were looking on, began to dance too. The coachman and the cook danced, the waiter and the chambermaid, and all the strangers, and the fire shovel and tongs; but these two fell down just as they made their first jump. It was a lively night!

The next morning Johannes went away from them all with his traveling companion, up the high mountains, and through the great pine woods. They came up so high that the church steeples far below them looked at last like little red berries among all the green; and they could see very far, many, many miles away, where they had never been. The world was lovely, and Johannes had never before seen so much of its beauty at the same time. The sun shone so warmly through the fresh blue air; and among the mountains he could hear the huntsmen blowing their horns so gaily and sweetly that tears came in his eyes, and he couldn't help saying, "Dear Lord, you're so good to us, I could kiss you because you're so kind and have given us all the beautiful things in the world."

The traveling companion also stood there with folded hands, and looked over the forest and the towns in the warm sunshine. At the same time they heard a strange, lovely sound over their heads; they looked up, and a great white swan was soaring in the air, and singing as they had never heard a bird sing till then. But the song became weaker and weaker; he bowed his head

and sank quite slowly down at their feet, where he lay dead, the beautiful bird!

"Two such splendid wings," said the traveling companion, "so white and large, as those which this bird has, are worth money; I will take them with me. You can see now it was a good thing I got a sabre!"

And so, with one blow, he cut off both the wings of the dead swan, for he wanted to keep them.

They now traveled for many, many miles over the mountains, till at last they saw a great town before them with hundreds of towers, which glittered like silver in the sun. In the midst of the town was a splendid marble palace, roofed with red gold. And there the king lived.

Johannes and the traveling companion wouldn't go into the town at once, but stayed in the inn outside the town, so that they could dress up a little; for they wanted to look nice when they came out in the streets. The host told them that the king was such a good man who never did anything to anybody, he wouldn't hurt a fly, but his daughter, well, God help us, she was a wicked princess! She was beautiful, all right—no one could be so pretty and so charming as she was—but of what use was that? She was a bad, evil witch, through whose fault many lovely princes had lost their lives. She had given permission to all men to seek her hand. Any one might come, prince or beggar; it was all the same to her. He had only to guess three things about which she questioned him. If he could do that she would marry him, and he would be king over the whole country when her father should die; but if he could not guess the three things, she had him hanged or had his head cut off! So bad and so wicked was the beautiful princess. Her father, the old king, was very sorry about it; but he could not forbid her to be so bad, because he had once said that he would have nothing to do with her sweethearts; she could

do as she liked. Every time a prince came, and was to guess to get the princess, he couldn't do it, and was hanged or lost his head. He had been warned in time, you see, and he needn't have proposed. The old king was so sorry for all this misery and woe that he used to go down on his knees with all his soldiers for a whole day in every year, praying that the princess might become good; but she wouldn't at all. The old women who drank whisky used to color it quite black before they drank it, they were so sorrowful—and they certainly could do no more.

"The horrid princess!" said Johannes, "she ought really to be whipped; that would do her good. If I were only the old king I'd whip her till the blood ran!"

Just then they heard the people outside shouting "Hurrah!" The princess came by; and she was really so beautiful that all the people forgot how wicked she was, and that is why they cried "Hurrah!" Twelve beautiful maidens, all in white silk gowns, and each with a golden tulip in her hand, rode on coal-black horses at her side. The princess herself had a snow-white horse, decorated with diamonds and rubies. Her riding habit was pure gold, and the whip she held in her hand looked like a sunbeam; the golden crown on her head was just like little stars out of the sky, and her mantle was sewn together out of more than a thousand beautiful butterfly wings. In spite of this, she herself was much more lovely than all her clothes.

When Johannes saw her, his face became as red as a drop of blood, and he could hardly utter a word. The princess looked just like the beautiful girl with the golden crown, of whom he had dreamt on the night when his father died. He thought she was lovely and he couldn't help being very fond of her. He said he was sure it couldn't be true that she was a wicked witch, who let people be hanged or beheaded if they couldn't guess the riddles she put to them.

"After all, anybody has a right to propose to her, even the poorest beggar; I really must go up to the castle; I can't help it."

They all told him not to try it, for he would certainly be no better off than all the rest. His traveling companion also told him not to; but Johannes was sure it would be all right. He brushed his shoes and his coat, washed his face and his hands, combed his beautiful yellow hair, and then went quite alone into the town and to the palace.

"Come in!" said the old king, when Johannes knocked at the door.

Johannes opened it, and the old king came to meet him in a dressing gown and embroidered slippers; he had the crown on his head, and the scepter in one hand and the orb in the other. "Wait a minute!" he said, and put the orb under his arm, so that he could reach out his hand to Johannes. But as soon as he heard that his visitor was a suitor, he began to cry so hard that both the scepter and the orb fell on the floor, and he had to wipe his eyes with his dressing gown. Poor old king!

"Give it up!" said he. "You'll get in trouble just like all the others. Now I'll just show you."

Then he led him out to the princess' pleasure garden, and it was a terrible sight! In every tree hung three or four princes who had proposed to the princess, but had not been able to guess the riddles she gave them. Whenever the breeze blew all the skeletons rattled, so that the little birds were frightened, and never dared to come into the garden. All the flowers were tied up to human bones, and in the flowerpots skulls stood and grinned. That was a nice garden for a princess.

"You can see for yourself now," said the old king. "What happened to all the others will happen to you, so please don't do it. You'll really make me unhappy, because I mind these things very much."

Johannes kissed the good old king's hand and said everything would be all right because he was so fond of the lovely princess.

Then the princess herself came riding into the courtyard, with all her ladies; and they went out to her and wished her good morning. She was certainly beautiful and she shook hands with Johannes and he liked her even more than before; he was sure she couldn't be a bad, wicked witch, as everybody said. Then they went up to the reception room and the little pages waited on them with jam and gingerbread nuts. But the old king was very sad; he could not eat anything at all. Besides, gingerbread nuts were too hard for him.

It was settled that Johannes should come to the palace again the next morning; then the judges and the whole council would be assembled, and would hear how he got along with his answers. If it went well, he was to come twice again; but so far nobody had guessed right the first time, and so they had had to lose their lives.

Johannes wasn't at all worried about how he would get along, in fact he was very cheerful, and thought only of the beautiful princess, and felt quite certain that the good Lord would help him, but how he did not know, and preferred not to think of it. He danced along on the road returning to the inn, where his traveling companion was waiting for him.

Johannes couldn't stop telling how nice the princess had been to him, and how beautiful she was. He said he already longed for the next day, when he was to go into the palace and try his luck in guessing.

But the traveling companion shook his head and was rather sad. "I am so fond of you!" said he. "We might have been together a long time yet, and now I am to lose you already! You poor dear Johannes! I should like to cry, but I won't spoil your happiness

on the last evening, perhaps, we shall ever spend together. We'll have a good time, a really good time. To-morrow, when you are gone, I can let myself cry."

All the people in the town had heard right away that a new suitor for the princess had arrived; and so there was great sorrow. The theater was closed; the women who sold cakes tied bits of crape round their sugar pigs, and the king and the priests were on their knees in the churches. There was great lamentation; because, of course, Johannes wouldn't have better luck than everybody else.

Late that night the traveling companion mixed a big bowl of punch, and said to Johannes, "We'll be very gay, and drink to the health of the princess." But when Johannes had drunk two glasses, he became so sleepy that he couldn't possibly keep his eyes open; he had to go to sleep. The traveling companion lifted him very gently from his chair, and laid him in the bed; and when it was dark night, he took the two large wings which he had cut off the swan and tied them to his own shoulders. Then he put in his pocket the longest of the switches he had got from the old woman who had fallen and broken her leg; and he opened the window and flew away over the town, straight toward the palace, where he seated himself in a corner under the window which looked into the bedroom of the princess.

All was quiet in the whole town. Now the clock struck a quarter to twelve, the window was opened, and the princess came out in a large white mantle and with long, black wings, and flew away across the town to a high mountain. But the traveling companion made himself invisible, so that she couldn't see him at all, and flew behind her, and whipped the princess with his switches, so that the blood actually came wherever he struck. My! What speed clear through the air! The

wind caught her mantle, so that it spread out on all sides like a great sail, and the moon shone through it.

"What a hailstorm! What a hailstorm!" said the princess at every blow she got from the rod; and it served her right. At last she came to the mountain, and knocked there. There was a rolling like thunder, as the mountain opened, and the princess went in. The traveling companion followed her, for no one could see him—he was invisible. They went through a large, long passage, where the walls sparkled in the strangest way: there were more than a thousand glowing spiders running up and down the walls and gleaming like fire. Then they came into a great hall built of silver and gold; flowers as big as sunflowers, red and blue, shone on the walls; but no one could pluck these flowers, for the stems were nasty poisonous snakes, and the flowers were streams of fire pouring out of their mouths. The whole ceiling was covered with shining glowworms and sky-blue bats, flapping their thin wings; it looked most peculiar. In the middle of the floor was a throne, carried by four horse skeletons, with harness of the red fire spiders; the throne itself was of milk-white glass, and the cushions were little black mice, biting each other's tails. Above it was a canopy of rose-pink spider's web, trimmed with the nicest little green flies, which gleamed like jewels. On the throne sat an old troll [a wizard], with a crown on his ugly head and a scepter in his hand. He kissed the princess on the forehead, made her sit down beside him on the costly throne, and then the music began. Big black grasshoppers played on mouth organs, and the owl beat its own stomach because it hadn't a drum. That was a queer concert! Tiny little goblins with will-o'-the-wisp lights in their caps danced around in the hall. But no one could see the traveling companion; he had placed himself just behind the throne, and heard and saw everything. The courtiers, who now came in, were

very nice and elegant; but he who had eyes to see didn't take long to find them out. They were nothing more than broomsticks with heads of cabbages on them, whom the troll had bewitched to look like people, and to whom he had given embroidered clothes. But it was all the same, anyway; they were only for show.

After there had been a little dancing, the princess told the troll that she had a new suitor, and therefore she asked him what she should think of to ask the suitor when he came up next day to the palace.

"Listen!" said the troll, "I'll tell you something: you must take something very easy, then he won't think of it at all. You think of one of your shoes. He won't guess that. Let him have his head cut off; but don't forget, when you come to me to-morrow night, to bring me his eyes, for I'll eat them."

The princess curtsied very low, and said she would not forget the eyes. The troll opened the mountain, and she flew home again; but the traveling companion followed her, and thrashed her again so hard with the switches that she sighed quite deeply about the heavy hailstorm, and hurried as much as she could to get back into the bedroom through the open window. But the traveling companion flew back to the inn, where Johannes was still asleep, took off his wings, and then lay down on the bed, for he might well be tired.

It was quite early in the morning when Johannes woke up. The traveling companion also got up, and said he had had a very strange dream in the night, about the princess and one of her shoes; and so he asked Johannes to be sure and ask if the princess might not have happened to think of one of her shoes. Of course that was what he had heard from the troll in the mountain, but he wouldn't tell Johannes about this, he only begged him to ask if she had not thought about one of her shoes.

"I might just as well ask about that as about anything else," said Johannes. "What you dreamed might very well be true, for I've always believed that the Lord would help me. But I'll say good-by to you anyway; if I guess wrong I'll never see you again."

Then they kissed each other, and Johannes went into the town and to the palace. The entire hall was filled with people: the judges sat in their armchairs and had eider-down pillows behind their heads, for they had a great deal to think about. The old king stood up, and wiped his eyes with a white pocket handkerchief. Now the princess came in. She was much more beautiful than yesterday, and bowed to all in the kindliest way; but to Johannes she gave her hand, and said, "Good morning to you."

Now Johannes was to guess what she had thought of. Oh, my, how sweetly she looked at him! But as soon as she heard him say the single word "shoe," she turned as white as chalk in the face, and trembled all over. But that didn't help her, for he had guessed right.

My goodness, how happy the old king was! He turned a somersault that took your breath away, and all the people clapped their hands for him and Johannes, who had guessed right the first time!

The traveling companion beamed with delight, when he heard how well matters had gone. But Johannes folded his hands and thanked the good God, who certainly would help him the second and third time. The next day he was to guess again.

The evening passed just like that of yesterday. While Johannes slept the traveling companion flew behind the princess out to the mountain, and whipped her even harder than the time before, for now he had taken two bundles of switches. No one saw him, and he heard everything. The princess was to think of her glove; and he told that to Johannes as if it had been a dream,

and in that way it wasn't any trouble for Johannes to guess right. Then there was the greatest happiness in the palace; the whole court turned somersaults, just as they had seen the king do the first time; but the princess lay on the sofa, and would not say a single word. Now, the question was, if Johannes could guess right the third time. If he could he was to have the beautiful princess and inherit the whole kingdom after the old king's death. If he failed, he was to lose his life, and the troll would eat his beautiful blue eyes.

That evening Johannes went early to bed, said his prayers, and went quietly to sleep. But the traveling companion bound his wings to his back and his sabre by his side, took all three switches with him, and flew away to the palace.

It was a pitch dark night. The wind blew so hard that the tiles flew off the roofs, and the trees in the garden where the skeletons hung bent like reeds before the storm. The lightning flashed out every minute, and the thunder rolled just as if it were one peal lasting the whole night. Now the window opened, and the princess flew out. She was as pale as death; but she laughed at the bad weather, and thought it wasn't bad enough. And her white mantle whirled in the wind like a great sail; but the traveling companion whipped her with the three switches, so that the blood dripped down on the ground, and at last she could scarcely fly any farther. But at last she came to the mountain.

"It's hailing and storming," she said. "I have never been out in such weather."

"You can get too much of a good thing," said the troll. Now she told him that Johannes had also guessed right the second time; if he did the same again to-morrow, then he had won, and she could never more come out to him in the mountain, and she couldn't go on bewitching things, and so she was very sad. "He won't

do any guessing," said the troll. "I'll find something he's never thought of, or he'll have to be a greater troll than I am. But now we'll have a good time." And then he took hold of both the princess's hands, and they danced about with all the little goblins and will-o'-the-wisps that were in the room. The red spiders jumped just as merrily up and down the walls; it looked as if the fire flowers were sparkling. The owl played the drum, the crickets piped, and the black grasshoppers played on the mouth organ. It was a gay affair.

When they had danced long enough the princess had to go home, for she might be missed in the palace. The troll said he'd go with her, then they would be that much longer together.

Then they flew away into the bad weather, and the traveling companion wore his three switches out on their backs. Never had the troll been out in such a hailstorm. In front of the palace he said good-by to the princess, and whispered to her at the same time, "Think of my head." But the traveling companion heard it; and just at the moment when the princess slipped through the window into her bedroom, and the troll was about to turn back, he seized him by his long black beard, and with his sabre cut off the nasty troll's head just by the shoulders, so that the troll did not even see him. The body he threw out into the sea to the fishes; but the head he only dipped into the water, and then tied it in his silk handkerchief, took it with him into the inn, and then lay down to sleep.

Next morning he gave Johannes the handkerchief and told him not to untie it until the princess asked him to tell her what she had thought of.

There were so many people in the great hall of the palace that they stood as close together as radishes tied together in a bundle. The council sat in the chairs with the soft pillows, and the old king had new

clothes on; the golden crown and scepter had been polished, and everything looked very grand. But the princess was very pale, and had a coal-black dress on, as if she were going to a funeral.

"What did I think of?" she asked Johannes. And he at once untied the handkerchief, and was himself quite frightened when he saw the head of the horrid troll. Everybody shuddered, for it was terrible to look upon; but the princess sat just like a statue, and could not utter a single word. At last she stood up, and gave Johannes her hand, for he had guessed right. She did not look at any one, only sighed aloud, and said, "Now you are my master!—this evening we will hold our wedding."

"That's what I like," said the old king, "that's the way I like to see things."

Everybody shouted "Hurrah!" The soldiers' band played music in the streets, the bells rang, and the cake women took the black crape off their sugar pigs, for now everybody was happy; three oxen roasted whole, and stuffed with ducks and fowls, were placed in the middle of the market; anybody could cut himself a piece; the fountains ran with the best wine; and whoever bought a penny cake at a baker's got six buns into the bargain, and the buns had raisins in them.

In the evening the whole town was illuminated; the soldiers fired off cannons, and the boys fired off crackers; and there was eating and drinking, clinking of glasses, and dancing in the palace. All the noble gentlemen and pretty ladies danced with each other, and one could hear, a long distance off, how they sang—

Here are many pretty girls, who all love to dance;
The Drummer's March is what they want in order to advance.
Turn, my pretty maiden, do, till the sole falls from your shoe.

But the princess was still a witch, of course, and didn't really like Johannes at all, and the traveling companion

remembered that. He gave Johannes three feathers out of the swan's wings, and a little bottle with a few drops in it, and told him that he must put a large tub of water before the bridal bed; and when the princess was about to get into bed, he should give her a little push, so that she should fall into the tub; and then he must duck her three times, after he had put in the feathers and poured in the drops; she would then be freed from the enchantment, and love him very much.

Johannes did all that the traveling companion had advised him to do. The princess screamed out loudly while he ducked her under the water, and struggled under his hands in the form of a great coal-black swan with fiery eyes. When she came up the second time above the water, the swan was white, with the exception of a black ring round her neck. Johannes prayed piously to God and let the water for the third time flow over the bird, and in the same moment it was again changed to the most beautiful princess. She was even more lovely than before, and thanked him, with tears in her beautiful eyes, that he had freed her from the enchantment.

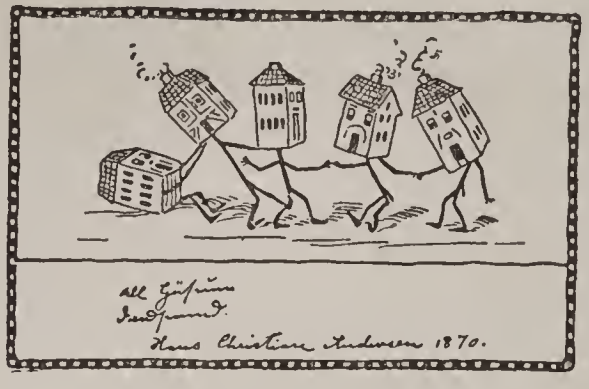
The next morning the old king came with his whole court, and then till late in the day there were many congratulations. Last of all came the traveling companion; he had his staff in his hand and his knapsack on his back. Johannes kissed him many times, and said he mustn't go away, he must stay with him whose happiness he made. But the traveling companion shook his head, and said mildly and kindly:

"No, now my time is up. I have only paid my debt. Do you remember the dead man whom the bad people wanted to hurt? You gave all you possessed in order that he might have rest in the grave. I am that man."

And in the same moment he vanished.

The wedding festivities lasted a whole month. Johannes and the princess loved each other ever so much,

and the old king lived many pleasant days, and let their little children ride on his knees and play with his scepter; but Johannes reigned over the whole kingdom.



The Little Mermaid

FAR out at sea the water is as blue as the petals of the loveliest cornflower, and as clear as the purest glass, but it is very deep, deeper than the length of the cable of any anchor and many church steeples would have to be put on top of each other to reach from the bottom over the water. Down there the sea people live.

Now you mustn't for a moment think that down there they have only the bare white sand; oh, no, the strangest trees and plants grow there, with leaves and stems so supple that at the least stir in the water they move as if they were alive. All the fishes, big and little, dart through the branches just like the birds in the air up here. In the very deepest spot lies the castle of the sea king. The walls are of coral and the tall, pointed windows of the clearest amber, but the roof is made of mussel shells that open and close with the flow of the water. That looks lovely, for in each shell lie gleaming

pearls, and even a single one of them would be the grandest thing in the crown of a queen.

The sea king down there had been a widower for many years, but his old mother kept house for him. She was a clever woman, but proud of her royal birth, and therefore she wore twelve oysters on her tail; the other people of rank could only wear six. Otherwise she deserved only great praise, especially because she was so fond of her granddaughters, the little sea princesses. They were six lovely children, but the youngest was the most beautiful of them all; her skin was as clear and as fine as a rose leaf, her eyes were as blue as the deepest sea, but, like all the rest, she had no feet, for her body ended in a fishtail.

All day long they could play in the castle, down in the halls, where living flowers grew out of the walls. The large amber windows were opened, and then the fishes swam into them, just as the swallows fly in to us when we open our windows; but the fishes swam straight up to the princesses, ate out of their hands, and let themselves be petted.

Outside the castle was a large garden with fiery red and dark blue trees; the fruits gleamed like gold, and the flowers like a burning fire; because they always kept moving their stalks and leaves. The earth itself was the finest sand, but blue as the flame of brimstone. A strange blue light lay on everything down there; one would have thought oneself high in the air, with the sky above and below, rather than at the bottom of the sea. During a calm the sun could be seen; it seemed like a purple flower, from whose chalice all light streamed out.

Each of the little princesses had her own little plot in the garden, where she might dig and plant whatever she wanted. One gave her flower bed the form of a whale; another thought it better to make hers like a little mermaid; but the youngest made hers quite round,

like the sun, and had only flowers which shone as red as the sun itself. She was a queer child, quiet and thoughtful; and when the other sisters dressed their plots up with strange things they had got from wrecked ships, she would have nothing except the red flowers which resembled the sun, and a pretty marble statue. This was a figure of a charming boy, hewn out of white clear stone, which had sunk down to the bottom of the sea from a wreck. She planted a rose-pink weeping willow beside this statue; the tree grew splendidly; it hung its fresh branches over the statue down to the blue sandy ground, where the shadow showed violet, and moved like the branches; it seemed as if the top of the tree and the roots were playing at kissing each other.

There was no greater pleasure for her than to hear of the world of men above them. The old grandmother had to tell all she knew of ships and towns, of men and animals. She found it especially strange and lovely that the flowers on earth had fragrance, they had none at the bottom of the sea, and that the woods were green, and that the fishes which one saw there among the trees could sing so loud and clear that it was a pleasure to hear them. What the grandmother called fishes were the little birds, otherwise they could not have understood her, for they had never seen a bird.

"When you have completed your fifteenth year," said the grandmother, "you'll be allowed to rise up out of the sea, to sit on the rocks in the moonlight, and to see the great ships sailing by. Then you will see forests and towns!"

The next year one of the sisters was fifteen years of age, but each of the others was one year younger than the next; so that the youngest had still all of five years to wait before she could come up from the bottom of the sea, and find out how our world looked. But one promised to tell the others what she had seen and what she had thought the most beautiful on the first day of her

visit; for their grandmother didn't tell them enough—there were so many things they wanted to know about.

None was so full of longing as the youngest—just that one who had the longest time to wait, and who was always quiet and thoughtful. Many a night she stood by the open window, and looked up through the dark blue water at the fishes splashing with their fins and tails. Moon and stars she could see; of course they shone faintly, but through the water they looked much larger than they do to us. When something like a black cloud passed among them, she knew that it was either a whale swimming over her head, or a ship with many people: they certainly did not think that a lovely little mermaid was standing down below stretching up her white hands toward the keel of their ship.

Now the eldest princess was fifteen years old, and might rise up to the surface of the sea.

When she came back, she had a hundred things to tell—but the nicest of all, she said, was to lie in the moonshine on a sandbank in the quiet sea, and to see the large town close to the coast, where the lights twinkled like a hundred stars, and to hear the music and the noise and clamor of carriages and men, to see the many church steeples, and to hear the ringing of the bells. Just because she couldn't get up there, she longed for them more than for anything else.

Oh, how the youngest sister listened; and afterward when she stood at the open window and looked up through the dark blue water, she thought of the great city with all its bustle and noise; and then she thought she could hear the church bells ringing, even down to the depth where she was.

In the following year, the second sister was allowed to rise up through the water and to swim wherever she pleased. She rose up just as the sun was setting; and that sight seemed to her the most beautiful. The whole sky had looked like gold, she said, and the clouds—well,

their loveliness was more than she could describe. Red and violet they sailed away above her, but, far swifter than they, a flight of wild swans flew like a long white veil over the water in the path of the sun. She swam toward them; but the sun sank, and the rose light quenched on the sea and in the clouds.

In the following year the next sister went up. She was the boldest of them all, and therefore she swam up a broad stream that ran to the sea. She saw lovely green hills clothed with vines; castles and farms peeped out from fine woods; she heard how all the birds sang; and the sun shone so warm that she often had to dive under the water to cool her burning face. In a little bay she found a whole swarm of little human children. They were quite naked, and splashed about in the water; she wanted to play with them, but they ran away scared, and a little black animal came—it was a dog, but she had never seen a dog—and it barked at her so terribly that she became frightened, and took to the open sea. But she could never forget the fine woods, the green hills, and the pretty children, who could swim in the water though they had no fishtails.

The fourth sister was not so bold: she stayed in the midst of the stormy sea, and declared that just there it was most beautiful. One could see for many miles around, and the sky above looked like a bell of glass. She had seen ships, but only in the far distance—they looked like seagulls; and the funny dolphins had thrown somersaults, and the big whales spouted out water from their nostrils, so that it looked like hundreds of fountains all around.

Now came the turn of the fifth sister. Her birthday came in the winter, and so she saw what the others had not seen the first time. The sea looked quite green, and large icebergs floated all around; every one looked like a pearl, she said, and still they were much taller than the church steeples built by men. They came in the

strangest shapes and sparkled like diamonds. She had seated herself on one of the largest, and all the sailing ships tacked around, frightened, to get out of the way of where she sat and let the wind play with her long hair. But in the evening clouds covered the sky, it thundered and lightened, and the black waves lifted the great ice blocks high up, and let them shine in the big flashes. On all the ships the sails were reefed, and there was fear and anguish. But she sat quietly on her floating iceberg, and saw the blue lightning strike zigzag into the sea.

Each of the sisters was delighted with the new and beautiful sights she saw when she first came out of the water; but since they now were allowed, as grown-up girls, to go whenever they liked, they didn't really care to. They wished themselves back again, and after about a month they said it was best of all down below, for there one felt so cozily at home.

Many an evening hour the five sisters linked arms and rose up in a row over the water. They had lovely voices, more charming than any mortal could have; and when a storm was approaching, so that they might expect that ships would go down, they swam in front of the ships and sang lovely songs, about how beautiful it was at the bottom of the sea, and asked the sailors not to be afraid to come down. But they couldn't understand the words, and they thought it was the storm; and they did not see the beauty below, for if the ships sank they were drowned, and came as corpses to the sea king's palace.

When the sisters rose up, arm in arm, in the evening through the water, the little sister stood all alone looking after them; and she felt as if she must cry, but the mermaid has no tears, and so she suffers all the more.

"Oh, if I were only fifteen years old!" said she. "I know I shall love the world up there very much, and the people who live and dwell there."

At last she was really fifteen years old.

"Well, now you're off our hands," said the grandmother, the old dowager queen. "Come, let me dress you up like your sisters."

And she put a wreath of white lilies in the girl's hair, but each petal in the flower was half a pearl; and the old lady let eight big oysters pinch on to the princess's tail, in token of her high rank.

"But that hurts so!" said the little mermaid. "Well, you can't have both style and comfort," said the old lady.

Oh, how glad she would have been to shake off all the finery and to lay aside the heavy wreath! Her red flowers in the garden were much more becoming, but she was afraid to change. "Good-by!" she said, and then she rose, light and clear as a bubble, up through the water.

The sun had just set when she lifted her head above the sea, but all the clouds still shone like roses and gold, and in the pale pink sky the evening star gleamed bright and beautiful. The air was mild and fresh and the sea without a ripple. There lay a great ship with three masts; one single sail only was set, for not a breeze stirred, and around in the tackling and on the yards sat the sailors. There was music and singing, and as the evening closed in, hundreds of colored lanterns were lighted, and it looked as if the flags of every nation were waving in the air. The little mermaid swam straight to the cabin window, and each time the sea lifted her up she could look through the panes, which were clear as crystal, and see many people standing dressed in their best. But the handsomest of all was the young prince with the great black eyes; he couldn't be much more than sixteen years old; it was his birthday, and therefore they were having this fine party. The sailors were dancing on deck; and when the young prince came out, more than a hundred rockets rose into the air; they shone as bright as day, so that the little

mermaid was almost frightened, and dived under the water; but soon she put out her head again, and then it seemed just as if all the stars of heaven were falling down on her. She had never seen such fireworks. Big suns whirled around, splendid fire fishes swung up into the blue air, and everything was mirrored in the clear, still sea. The ship itself was so brightly lit up that every little rope could be seen, and the people even more clearly. Oh, how handsome the young prince was! And he pressed the people's hands and smiled, while the music rang out in the lovely night.

It became late; but the little mermaid could not turn her eyes from the ship and from the beautiful prince. The colored lanterns were put out, rockets no more flew into the air, and no more cannons were fired; but away down in the deep the sea murmured and muttered; and she sat on the water, swaying up and down, so that she could look into the cabin. But as the ship went faster, one sail after another was spread. And now the waves rose higher, big clouds came up, and there was lightning in the distance. Oh! it was going to be terrible weather, therefore the sailors furled the sails. Swiftly rocking, the big ship flew over the wild sea; the water rose up like great black mountains, ready to fall on the masts; but like a swan the ship ducked down among the high waves and was lifted again on the towering waters. The little mermaid just thought this was an amusing trip, but the sailors didn't think so. The ship groaned and creaked; the thick planks were bent by the heavy blows the sea struck against the ship; the mainmast snapped in two like a thin reed; and the ship lay over on her side, while the water rushed into the hold. Now the little mermaid saw that the people were in danger; she herself had to take care to avoid the beams and bits of the ship which were floating about on the water. One moment it was so pitch dark that she couldn't see a thing, but when it lightened it was

so bright that she could tell every one on board. Every one was doing the best he could for himself. She looked particularly for the young prince, and when the ship went to pieces she saw him sink into the deep sea. At first she was very glad, for now he would come down to her. But then she remembered that people could not live in the water, and that when he got down to her father's palace he would certainly be dead. No, he must not die: so she swam around among the drifting beams and planks, quite forgetting that one of them might have crushed her. Diving down deep under the water, she again rose high up among the waves, and in this way she at last came to the prince, who could scarcely swim longer in that stormy sea. His arms and legs began to fail him, his beautiful eyes closed, and he would have died if the little mermaid hadn't come. She held his head up over the water, and then let the waves carry her and him wherever they wanted to.

In the morning the bad weather was over. There wasn't a stick left of the ship. The sun came up red and shining out of the water; it was as if its beams brought back life to the cheeks of the prince, but his eyes remained closed. The mermaid kissed his high fair forehead and put back his wet hair, and he seemed to her to be like the marble statue in her little garden; she kissed him again and hoped that he might live.

Now she saw dry land in front of her—high blue mountains, on whose tops the white snow gleamed as if swans were lying there. Down on the coast were lovely green woods, and there was a building—she could not tell whether it was a church or a convent—but a building it was. In its garden grew orange and lemon trees, and high palms waved in front of the gate. The sea formed a little bay there; it was a still calm, but very deep. Straight toward the rock where the fine white sand had been cast up, she swam with the hand-

some prince, and laid him on the sand, taking especial care that his head was raised in the warm sunshine.

Now all the bells rang in the big white building, and many young girls came walking through the garden. Then the little mermaid swam farther out between some high stones that rose out of the water, laid some sea foam on her hair and neck, so that no one could see her little face, and then she watched to see who would come to the poor prince.

In a short time a young girl went that way. She seemed to be quite frightened, but only for a moment; then she brought more people, and the sea maid saw that the prince came back to life and that he smiled at everybody around him. But he didn't smile in her direction; he couldn't know, of course, that she had saved him. And she felt very sorrowful; and when he was taken away into the big building, she dived mournfully under the water and returned to her father's palace.

She had always been gentle and thoughtful, but now she became much more so. Her sisters asked her what she had seen for the first time up there, but she wouldn't tell them anything.

Many an evening and many a morning she went up to the place where she had left the prince. She saw how the fruits of the garden grew ripe and were gathered; she saw how the snow melted on the high mountain; but she did not see the prince, and so she always returned home more sorrowful still. Then her only comfort was to sit in her little garden, and to put her arms around the beautiful marble statue that looked like the prince; but she didn't take care of her flowers; they grew like a wilderness over the paths, and trailed their long leaves and stalks up into the tree branches, so that it was quite dark there.

At last she couldn't stand it any longer, and told everything to one of her sisters, and then all the others

heard of it too; but nobody knew of it except these and a few other mermaids who didn't say a thing about it except to their best friends. One of these knew who the prince was; she, too, had seen the festival on board the ship; and she knew where he came from and where his kingdom lay.

"Come, little sister!" said the other princesses; and, linking their arms together, they rose up in a long row out of the sea, at the place where they knew the prince's palace stood.

This palace was built of a pale yellow, glistening stone, with great marble staircases, one of which went right down into the sea. Over the roof rose splendid gilt cupolas, and between the pillars which surrounded the whole building stood marble statues which looked as if they were alive. Through the clear glass in the tall windows one looked into the most gorgeous halls, where costly silk curtains and tapestries were hung, and all the walls were decked with splendid pictures, so that it was a perfect delight to look at them. In the middle of the largest hall a big fountain splashed; its jets shot high up toward the glass dome in the ceiling, through which the sun shone down upon the water and on the lovely plants growing in the great basin.

Now she knew where he lived, and many an evening and many a night she spent there on the water. She swam far closer to the land than any of the others would have dared; indeed, she even went up the narrow canal under the splendid marble balcony, which threw a long shadow on the water. Here she sat and watched the young prince, who thought himself all alone in the bright moonlight.

Many an evening she saw him sailing with music in his fine boat where flags were waving; she peeped up through the green reeds, and when the wind caught her silvery-white veil, and any one saw it, they thought it was a white swan lifting its wings.

Many a night when the fishermen lay with torches on the sea she heard them tell much good of the young prince; and she was happy that she had saved his life when he was drifting half dead on the waves; she thought how quietly his head had rested on her bosom, and how tenderly she had kissed him; but he knew nothing of it, and could not even dream of her.

More and more she began to love human beings, and more and more she wanted to rise up among them. Their world seemed far larger than her own. For they could fly over the sea in ships, and mount up the high hills far above the clouds, and the lands they owned stretched out in woods and fields farther than her eyes could reach. There was so much she wanted to know, but her sisters couldn't answer all her questions; therefore she asked the old grandmother; and she was well acquainted with the "higher world" as she very rightly called the countries above the sea.

"If human beings are not drowned," asked the little mermaid, "can they live forever? Don't they die as we die down here in the sea?"

"Yes," said the old lady. "They, too, must die, and their life is even shorter than ours. We can live to be three hundred years old, but when we no longer exist here, we become only foam on the water, and have not even a grave down here among those we love. We have no immortal soul; we never receive another life; we are like the green rushes that once cut through can never be green again. But human beings have a soul which lives forever, lives even after the body has turned to earth; it rises through the bright air up to all the shining stars. Just as we rise out of the water and see the human countries, so they rise up to lovely, unknown places, never to be seen by us."

"Why didn't we get an immortal soul?" asked the little mermaid sorrowfully. "I would gladly give all the hundreds of years I have to live to be a human

being only for one day, and later to come to the world of heaven."

"You mustn't be thinking about that," said the old lady. "We're much happier and much better off than the people up there."

"I must die and float as foam on the sea, and not hear the music of the waves, and not see the pretty flowers and the red sun? Can I not do anything to win an immortal soul!"

"No!" answered the grandmother. "Only if a man were to love you so that you should be more to him than father or mother; if he should cling to you with his every thought and with all his love, and let the priest lay his right hand in yours with a promise of faithfulness here and in all eternity, then his soul would flow into your body, and you would receive a share of the happiness of mankind. He would give a soul to you and still keep his own. But that can never come to pass. The thing that's so nice here in the sea—the fishtail—they would consider ugly on the earth: they don't understand it; to be called beautiful there one must have two clumsy supports which they call legs."

Then the little mermaid sighed, and looked mournfully at her fishtail.

"Let's be happy!" said the old lady. "Let's skip and jump in the three hundred years we have to live. That's more than long enough, then afterward we can rest all the merrier in our graves. This evening we shall have a court ball."

Such pomp as that was is never seen on earth. The walls and the ceiling of the big ballroom were of thick but transparent glass. Several hundreds of huge shells, rose pink and grass green, stood on each side in rows, filled with a blue fire which lit up the whole hall and shone through the walls, so that the sea outside was quite lit up; one could see all the innumerable fishes, big and small, swimming toward the glass walls;

on some the scales gleamed purple, while in others they shone like silver and gold. Through the middle of the hall flowed a broad stream, and on this the mermen and mermaids danced to their own lovely songs. The people of the earth haven't such beautiful voices. The little mermaid sang most sweetly of all, and everybody applauded her, and for a moment she felt joy in her heart, for she knew she had the loveliest voice of all in the sea or on the earth. But soon she thought again of the world above her; she could not forget the charming prince, or her sorrow at not having an immortal soul like his. Therefore she crept out of her father's palace, and while song and gaiety went on inside, she sat sadly in her little garden. Then she heard the bugle horn sounding through the waters, and thought, "Now he must be sailing above, he whom I love more than father or mother, he on whom my wishes hang, and in whose hand I should like to lay my life's happiness. I will dare everything to win him and an immortal soul. While my sisters dance in there in my father's palace, I will go to the sea witch. I've always been so frightened of her, but perhaps she can counsel and help me."

Now the little mermaid went out of her garden to the roaring whirlpools behind which the sea witch lived. She had never gone that way before. No flowers grew there, no sea grass; only the bare gray sand stretched out toward the whirlpools, where the water rushed round like roaring mill wheels and tore down everything it seized into the deep. In between these crushing whirls she had to walk to get into the domain of the sea witch; and for a long way there was no other road except one which led over warm bubbling mud: this the witch called her peat bog. Behind it lay her house in the midst of a weird wood, in which all the trees and bushes were polypes—half animals, half plants. They looked like hundred-headed snakes growing up out

of the earth. All the branches were long slimy arms, with fingers like supple worms, and they moved joint by joint from the root to the farthest point; all that they could seize on in the water they held fast and never again let it go. The little mermaid stopped in front of them quite frightened; her heart beat with fear, and she was nearly turning back; but then she thought of the prince and the human soul, and her courage came back again. She bound her long fluttering hair closely around her head, so that the polypes might not seize it. She put her hands together on her breast, and then shot forward as a fish shoots through the water among the hideous polypes, who stretched out their supple arms and fingers after her. She saw that each of them held something it had seized with hundreds of little arms, like strong iron bands. People who had perished at sea and had sunk deep down peered out as white skeletons from the arms of the polypes; ships' rudders and chests they also held fast, and skeletons of land animals, and a little mermaid whom they had caught and strangled; and this seemed to her the most terrible of all.

Now she came to a big slimy place in the wood, where fat water snakes rolled about, showing their ugly white and yellow bodies. In the middle of this place was a house built of white bones of shipwrecked men; there sat the sea witch feeding a toad out of her mouth, just as a person might feed a little canary bird with sugar. The horrid fat water snakes she called her little chickens and let them roll around on her large swampy breast.

"I know what you want," said the sea witch. "It is stupid of you, but you shall have your way, for it will get you in trouble, my little princess. You want to get rid of your fishtail, and to get two stumps instead of it, like those the people of the earth walk with, so that the young prince may fall in love with you, and you may get him and an immortal soul." And

with this the witch laughed loudly and disagreeably, so that the toad and the water snakes tumbled down to the ground, where they crawled about. "You come just in time," said the witch, "to-morrow at the rise of the sun I could not help you until another year had gone by. I will make you a draught, with which you must swim to land to-morrow before the sun rises, and seat yourself there and drink it; then your tail will part in two and shrink in and become what the people of the earth call pretty legs, but it will hurt you—it will seem as if you were cut with a sharp sword. All who see you will say you are the loveliest daughter of man they ever saw. You will keep your graceful walk; no dancer will be able to move so lightly as you; but every step you take will be as if you trod upon sharp knives, and as if your blood must flow. If you will bear all this, I can help you."

"Yes!" said the little mermaid, with a trembling voice; and she thought of the prince and the immortal soul.

"But, remember," said the witch, "when you have once received a human form, you can never be a mermaid again; you can never go down through the water to your sisters or to your father's palace; and if you do not win the prince's love, so that he forgets father and mother for your sake, clings to you with every thought, and tells the priest to join your hands, you will not receive an immortal soul. On the first morning after he has married another, your heart will break and you will become foam on the water."

"I will do it," said the little mermaid; but she became as pale as death.

"But you must pay me, too," said the witch; "and it is not a trifle that I ask. You have the finest voice of all here at the bottom of the sea; with that you think to enchant him; but this voice you must give to me. The best thing you own I will have for my costly draught!

For I must give you my own blood in it, so that the draught may be sharp as a two-edged sword."

"But if you take away my voice," said the little mermaid, "what will I have?"

"Your beautiful form," replied the witch, "your graceful walk, and your eloquent eyes: with those you can surely bewitch a human heart. Well, have you lost your courage? Put out your little tongue, and then I will cut it off for my payment, and then you shall have the strong draught."

"Let it be so," said the little mermaid.

And the witch put on her pot to brew the draught.

"Cleanliness is a good thing," said she; and she scoured out the pot with the snakes, which she tied up in a big knot; then she scratched her breast, and let her black blood drop into it. The steam rose up in the strangest forms, enough to frighten and terrify one. Every moment the witch threw something else into the pot; and when it boiled hard it was like the weeping of crocodiles. At last the draught was ready. It looked like the purest water.

"There you have it," said the witch.

And she cut off the little mermaid's tongue, so that now she was dumb, and could neither sing nor speak.

"If the polypes should lay hold of you when you go back through my forest," said the witch, "just throw a single drop of this drink on them, and their arms and fingers will fly into a thousand pieces." But the little mermaid didn't need to do this: the polypes drew back in terror when they saw the shining drink, that gleamed in her hand as if it were a twinkling star. In this way she soon passed through the forest, the bog, and the roaring whirlpools.

She could see her father's palace. The torches were extinguished in the big ballroom, and they were certainly sleeping inside, but she did not dare to go to them, now that she was dumb and was about to leave

them forever. She felt as if her heart would break with sorrow. She crept into the garden, took a flower from each of her sisters' flower beds, blew a thousand kisses toward the palace, and rose up through the dark blue sea.

The sun had not yet risen when she saw the prince's castle and mounted the splendid marble staircase. The moon shone beautifully clear. The little mermaid drank the sharp burning draught, and it seemed as if a two-edged sword went through her delicate body. She fainted from it, and lay as if she were dead. When the sun shone out over the sea she woke up, and felt a sharp pain; but just before her stood the handsome young prince. He fixed his coal-black eyes on her, so that she cast down her own, and then she saw that her fishtail was gone, and that she had the prettiest pair of white legs a little girl could have. But she had no clothes, so she wrapped herself in her long hair. The prince asked who she was and how she had come there; and she looked at him mildly, but very sadly, with her dark blue eyes, for she could not speak. Then he took her by the hand, and led her into the castle. Each step she took was, as the witch had told her, as if she were treading on pointed needles and sharp knives, but she bore it gladly. At the prince's right hand she moved on, light as a bubble, and he, like all the rest, was astonished at her graceful swaying movements.

Now she got costly clothes of silk and silken muslins. In the castle she was the most beautiful of all; but she was dumb, and could neither sing nor speak. Lovely slaves, dressed in silk and gold, stepped forward and sang before the prince and his royal parents; one sang more charmingly than all the rest, and the prince smiled at her and clapped his hands. Then the little mermaid was sad; she knew that she herself had sung far more sweetly, and thought:

"Oh! if only he could know that I have given away my voice forever to be with him."

Now the slaves danced pretty waving dances to the loveliest music; then the little mermaid lifted her beautiful white arms, stood on the tips of her toes, and glided dancing over the floor as no one had yet danced. At each movement her beauty was seen more clearly, and her eyes spoke straighter to the heart than the songs of the slaves.

All were delighted, and especially the prince, who called her his little foundling; and she danced again and again, although every time she touched the earth it seemed as if she were treading on sharp knives. The prince said that she should always stay with him, and she received permission to sleep on a velvet cushion before his door.

He had a page's dress made for her, so that she could follow him on horseback. They rode through the fragrant woods, where the green boughs swept their shoulders and the little birds sang in the fresh leaves. She climbed with the prince up the high mountains, and although her delicate feet bled so that even the others could see it, she laughed at it herself, and followed him until they saw the clouds sailing beneath them like a flock of birds traveling to distant lands.

At home in the prince's castle, when the others slept at night, she went out on the broad marble steps. It cooled her burning feet to stand in the cold sea water, and then she thought of those in the deep.

Once, in the nighttime, her sisters came arm in arm. They sang sadly as they swam over the water; and she beckoned to them, and they recognized her, and told her how she had grieved them all. Then they visited her every night; and once she saw far out her old grandmother, who had not been above the surface for many years, and the sea king with his crown on his

head. They stretched out their hands toward her, but did not venture so near the land as her sisters.

Day by day the prince grew more fond of her. He loved her as one loves a dear, good child, but it never came into his head to make her his wife; and yet she must become his wife, or she would not receive an immortal soul, and would have to become foam on the sea on his wedding morning.

"Don't you like me better than anybody else?" the eyes of the little mermaid seemed to say, when he took her in his arms and kissed her fair forehead.

"Yes, you are dearest to me!" said the prince, "for you have the best heart of them all. You are the most devoted to me, and you look like a young girl whom I once saw, but whom I certainly shall not find again. I was on board a ship which was wrecked. The waves threw me ashore near a holy temple, where several young girls performed the service. The youngest of them found me by the shore and saved my life. I only saw her twice: she was the only one in the world I could love; but you are so like her you almost take the place of her image in my soul. She belongs to the holy temple, and therefore my good fortune has sent you to me. We will never part!"

"Ah! he does not know that I saved his life," thought the little mermaid. "I carried him over the sea to the wood where the temple stands. I sat there under the foam and looked to see if any one would come. I saw the beautiful girl whom he loves better than me." And the mermaid sighed deeply—she could not weep. "The girl belongs to the holy temple," he has said, "and will never come out into the world—they will meet no more. I am with him and see him every day; I will cherish him, love him, give up my life for him."

But now they said that the prince was to marry, and that the beautiful daughter of a neighboring king was to be his wife, and that was why so splendid a

ship was being fitted out. The story was, that the prince traveled to visit the land of the neighboring king, but that it was really done that he might see the king's daughter. A great company was to go with him. The little mermaid shook her head and smiled; she knew the prince's thoughts far better than any of the others.

"I must travel," he had said to her. "I must see the beautiful princess: my parents desire it, but they do not wish to force me to bring her home as my bride.. I cannot love her. She is not like the beautiful maiden in the temple, whom you are like. If I were to choose a bride, I would rather choose you, my dumb foundling with the speaking eyes."

And he kissed her red lips and played with her long hair, and laid his head on her heart, so that it dreamed of happiness and of an immortal soul.

"You are not afraid of the sea, my dumb child?" said he when they stood on the splendid ship which was to carry him to the country of the neighboring king; and he told her of storm and calm, of strange fishes in the deep, and of what the divers had seen there. And she smiled at his tales, for she knew better than any one what there was at the bottom of the sea.

In the moon-clear night, when all were asleep, except the steersman who stood by the helm, she sat on the side of the ship gazing down through the clear water. She thought she saw her father's palace. High on the battlements stood her old grandmother, with the silver crown on her head, and looked through the rushing tide up at the vessel's keel. Then her sisters came up over the water, and looked mournfully at her and wrung their white hands. She waved at them, smiled, and wished to tell them that she was well and happy; but the cabin boy came near her, and her sisters dived down, so that he kept on thinking that the white he had seen was foam on the water.

The next morning the ship sailed into the harbor of the neighboring king's splendid city. All the church bells were ringing, and from the high towers the trumpets were blown, while the soldiers stood with flying colors and flashing bayonets. Each day brought some festivity with it; balls and entertainments followed one another; but the princess was not yet there. People said she was being educated in a holy temple far away, where she was learning every royal virtue. At last she arrived.

The little mermaid was anxious to see the beauty of the princess, and she had to acknowledge it. A lovelier being she had never seen. The princess's skin was pure and clear, and behind the long dark eyelashes smiled a pair of faithful dark blue eyes.

"It is you," said the prince, "you who saved me when I lay like a corpse on the shore!" and he folded his blushing bride to his heart. "Oh, I am too, too happy!" he said to the little mermaid. "What I never dared to hope is fulfilled. You will rejoice at my happiness, for you are the most devoted to me of them all!"

And the little mermaid kissed his hand; and it seemed already to her as if her heart was broken, for his wedding morning was to bring death to her, and change her into foam on the sea.

All the church bells were ringing, and heralds rode about the streets announcing the betrothal. On every altar fragrant oil was burning in costly silver lamps. The priests swung their censers, and bride and bridegroom laid hand in hand, and received the bishop's blessing. In silk and gold the little mermaid held up the bride's train; but her ears heard nothing of the festive music, her eyes did not see the holy ceremony; she thought of the night of her death, and of all she had lost in this world.

On the same evening the bride and bridegroom went on

board the ship. The cannon roared, all the flags waved; in the midst of the ship a costly tent of gold and purple, with the most beautiful cushions, had been set up, and there the married pair were to sleep in the cool still night.

The sails swelled in the wind and the ship glided smoothly and lightly over the clear sea. When it grew dark, colored lamps were lighted and the sailors danced lively dances on deck. The little sea maid thought of the first time when she had risen up out of the sea, and had seen the same splendor and joy, and she whirled into the dance, hovering as the swallow hovers when it is pursued; and all shouted their admiration, never had she danced so marvelously. Her delicate feet were cut as if with sharp knives, but she did not feel it, for in her heart was a crueler cut. She knew this was the last evening on which she might see him for whom she had left her people and her home, had given up her beautiful voice, and had suffered unheard-of pains every day, while he was utterly unconscious of all. It was the last evening she might breathe the same air with him, and see the starry sky and the deep sea; and everlasting night without thought or dream awaited her, for she had no soul, and could win none. And everything was merriment and gladness on the ship till past midnight, and she laughed and danced with thoughts of death in her heart. The prince kissed his beautiful bride, and she played with his black hair, and hand in hand they went to rest in the splendid tent.

It became quiet on the ship; only the helmsman stood by the helm, and the little mermaid leaned her white arms on the bulwark and looked out toward the east for the morning dawn—the first ray, she knew, would kill her. Then she saw her sisters rising out of the sea; they were pale, like herself; their long beautiful hair no longer fluttered in the wind—it had been cut off.

"We have given it to the witch, that she might bring you help, so that you may not die to-night. She has given us a knife; here it is—look! how sharp! Before the sun rises you must thrust it into the heart of the prince, and when the warm blood falls on your feet they will grow together again into a fishtail, and you will become a mermaid again, and come back to us, and live for three hundred years before you become dead salt sea foam. Hurry! He or you must die before the sun rises! Our old grandmother mourns so that her white hair has fallen off, as ours did under the witch's scissors. Kill the prince and come back! Hurry! Do you see that red streak in the sky? In a few minutes the sun will rise, and you must die!"

And they gave a strange, deep sigh, and sank into the waves.

The little mermaid drew back the purple curtain from the tent, and saw the beautiful bride sleeping with her head on the prince's breast; and she bent down and kissed his brow, and looked up to the sky where the morning red was gleaming brighter and brighter; then she looked at the sharp knife, and again fixed her eyes on the prince, who in his sleep murmured his bride's name. Only she was in his thoughts, and the knife trembled in the mermaid's hands. But then she flung it far away into the waves—they gleamed red where it fell, and it seemed as if drops of blood trickled up out of the water. Once more she looked with half-extinguished eyes upon the prince; then she threw herself from the ship into the sea, and felt her body dissolving into foam.

Now the sun rose up out of the sea. The rays fell mild and warm on the cold sea foam, and the little mermaid felt nothing of death. She saw the bright sun, and over her head hovered hundreds of lovely transparent beings; through them she could see the white sails of the ship and the red clouds of the sky; their

speech was melody, but so spiritual that no human ear could hear it, just as no earthly eye could see them; without wings they floated through the air. The little mermaid found that she had a body like these, and was rising more and more out of the foam.

"To whom am I coming?" she asked, and her voice sounded like that of the other beings, so spiritual, that no earthly music could be compared to it.

"To the daughters of the air!" answered the others. "A mermaid has no immortal soul, and can never gain one, unless she wins the love of a mortal. Her eternal existence depends on the power of another. The daughters of the air have likewise no immortal soul, but they can make themselves one through good deeds. We fly to the hot countries, where the close, pestilent air kills men, and there we bring coolness. We spread the fragrance of the flowers through the air, and send refreshment and health. After we have striven for three

hundred years to do all the good we can, we receive an immortal soul and take part in the eternal happiness of men. You, poor little mermaid, have striven with your whole heart after the same things; you have suffered and endured; now you can raise yourself by good

deeds to the world of the spirits of the air, and can gain an immortal soul after three hundred years."

And the little mermaid lifted her bright arms toward God's sun, and for the first time she felt tears. On the ship there was again life and noise. She saw the prince and his lovely bride searching for her; then they looked mournfully at the bubbling foam, as if they knew that she had thrown herself into the waves. Invisible, she kissed the forehead of the bride, smiled to the prince, and mounted with the other children of the air on the rosy cloud which floated through the air.

"After three hundred years we shall thus float into paradise!"

"And we may even get there sooner," whispered one. "Invisibly we float into the houses of men where children are, and for every day on which we find a good child that brings joy to its parents and deserves their love, our time of trial is shortened. The child does not know when we fly through the room; and when we smile with joy over the child, a year is counted off from the three hundred; but when we see a naughty or a wicked child, we shed tears of grief, and for every tear a day is added to our time of trial."

The Emperor's New Clothes

MANY years ago there lived an emperor who was so enormously fond of nice new clothes that he spent all his money trying to look really dressed up. He didn't care for his soldiers, didn't care for the theater, didn't care for driving in the park except for the chance to show off his new clothes. He had a coat for every hour of the day, and just as people say about a king, "He is in council," so here they always said, "The emperor is in the wardrobe."

The big city where he lived was a very gay place. Crowds of visitors came every day, and one day two swindlers came. They pretended they were weavers and said they knew how to weave the most gorgeous cloth you could imagine. Not only were their colors and patterns, they said, remarkably beautiful, but the clothes

made of the stuff had the strange property that they became invisible to any one who was unfit for the office he held, or who was stupider than the law allowed.

"Those would be nice clothes!" thought the emperor. "If I wore them, I could find out what men in my empire are not fit for the places they have; I could tell the clever from the stupid. Yes, that cloth must be woven for me at once!"

And he gave the two swindlers a lot of money in advance to make them begin work.

And they did put up two looms, and pretended to be working; but they had nothing at all on their looms. They kept on demanding the finest silk and the costliest gold; this they put into their own pockets, and worked at the empty looms till late into the night.

"Now I should really like to know how far they have got on with the stuff," thought the emperor. But he actually had a queer sensation in his heart when he thought that whoever was stupid or no good in his office couldn't see it. He believed, indeed, that he had nothing to fear for himself, but he wanted to send some one else first to see how matters stood. All the people in the whole city knew what peculiar power the stuff possessed, and all were anxious to see how bad or how stupid their neighbors were.

"I will send my honest old cabinet minister to the weavers," thought the emperor. "He can tell best what the stuff looks like, because he's a sensible man and nobody is better in his office than he is."

So the decent old minister went into the hall where the two swindlers sat working at the empty looms.

"Mercy on us!" thought the old minister, and he opened his eyes wide. "I can't see anything at all!" But he didn't say that.

Both the swindlers begged him to be kind enough to come nearer, and asked if he didn't think that was a

lovely pattern and beautiful colors. Then they pointed to the empty loom, and the poor old minister went on opening his eyes; but he could see nothing, for there was nothing to see.

"Dear me!" he thought, "could it be that I am stupid? I never thought that, and not a soul must know it. Am I not fit for my office?—No, it will never do for me to tell that I couldn't see the stuff."

"Well, haven't you anything to say about it?" said one of the weavers.

"Oh, it is charming—perfectly darling!" said the old minister, as he peered through his spectacles. "What a fine pattern, and what colors! Yes, I shall tell the emperor that I am very much pleased with it."

"Well, we're very glad," said both the weavers; and then they named the colors, and explained the strange pattern. The old minister listened carefully, so that he could repeat it when he went back to the emperor. And so he did.

Now the swindlers asked for more money, and more silk and gold, which they said they wanted for weaving. They put everything into their own pockets, and not a thread was put on the loom; but they kept on working at the empty frames as before.

The emperor soon sent another simple official to see how the weaving was going on, and if the stuff would soon be ready. He had no better luck than the first: he looked and looked, but, as there was nothing to be seen but the empty looms, he could see nothing.

"Yes, isn't this a fine piece of stuff?" asked the two swindlers; and they pointed out and explained the handsome pattern which wasn't there at all.

"I know I am not stupid!"—thought the man—"it must be my good office, for which I am not fit. That's very queer, but I mustn't let anybody notice it." And so he praised the stuff he didn't see, and expressed his pleasure at the beautiful colors and the charming pat-

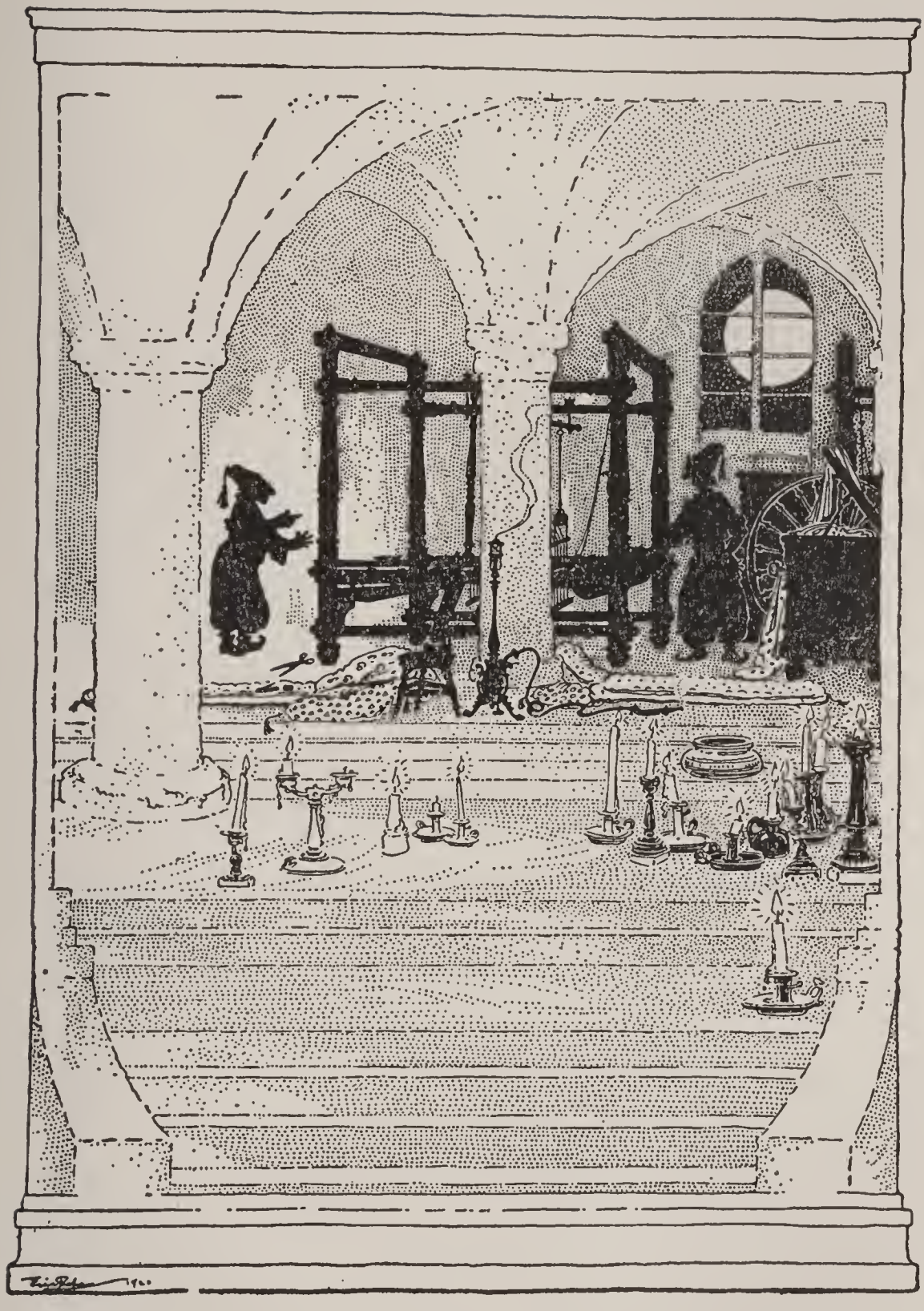
tern. "Yes, it is perfectly darling," he said to the emperor.

All the people in the town were talking of the gorgeous stuff. The emperor now wanted to see it himself while it was still on the loom. With a whole crowd of chosen men, among whom were also the decent old officials who had already been there, he went to the two cunning swindlers, who were now weaving with might and main without fiber or thread.

"Isn't it magnifique?" said both the good officials, who had already been there once. "Will your majesty see what a pattern, what colors?" And then they pointed to the empty loom, for they thought that the others could probably see the stuff.

"What's this?" thought the emperor. "I can see nothing at all! That is terrible. Am I stupid? Am I unfit to be emperor? That would be the most dreadful thing that could happen to me.—Oh, it is *very* pretty!" he said aloud. "It has our exalted approbation." And he nodded in a contented way, and gazed at the empty loom, for he wouldn't say that he couldn't see anything. His whole retinue looked and looked, and saw nothing, any more than the rest; but, like the emperor, they said, "That *is* pretty!" and counseled him to wear these splendid new clothes for the first time at the great procession soon to take place. "It is magnifique, delicious, excellent!" went from mouth to mouth, and they were all marvelously pleased. The emperor gave each of the swindlers a cross to hang at his buttonhole and the title of Knight of the Loom.

The whole night before the morning on which the procession was to take place the swindlers were up, and had more than sixteen candles burning. The people could see that they were hard at work, finishing the emperor's new clothes. They pretended to take the stuff down



from the loom; they made cuts in the air with big scissors; they sewed with needles without thread; and at last they said, "Now the clothes are ready!"

The emperor came himself with his noblest cavaliers; and the two swindlers lifted up one arm as if they were holding something, and said, "See, here are the trousers! here is the coat; here is the cloak!" and so on. "It is as light as a spider's web; one would think one had nothing on; but that is just the beauty of it."

"Yes," said all the cavaliers; but they couldn't see anything, for nothing was there.

"Does your imperial majesty please to condescend to undress?" said the swindlers, "then we will put the new clothes on you here in front of the large mirror."

The emperor took off his clothes, and the swindlers pretended to put on him each of the new garments, and they took him round the waist, and seemed to fasten on something; that was the train; and the emperor turned round and round before the mirror.

"Oh, how well they look! how wonderfully they fit!" everybody said. "What a pattern! what colors! That *is* a splendid dress!"

"They are standing outside with the canopy which is to be borne above your majesty in the procession!" announced the head master of the ceremonies.

"Well, I'm ready, of course," said the emperor. "Don't they fit me well?" And then he turned around again in front of the mirror because he wanted it to seem as if he were giving his fine clothes a good look.

The chamberlains, who were to carry the train, groped with their hands on the floor, just as if they were picking up the mantle; then they pretended to be holding something up in the air. They didn't dare to let anybody guess that they couldn't see anything.

So the emperor went in procession under the rich canopy, and every one in the streets said, "Heavens! how matchless the emperor's new clothes are! What a lovely train his mantle has! What a miraculous fit!" No one would let it be known that he couldn't see anything, for that would have shown that he was not fit for his office, or was very stupid. Not any of the emperor's clothes had ever had such a success as these.

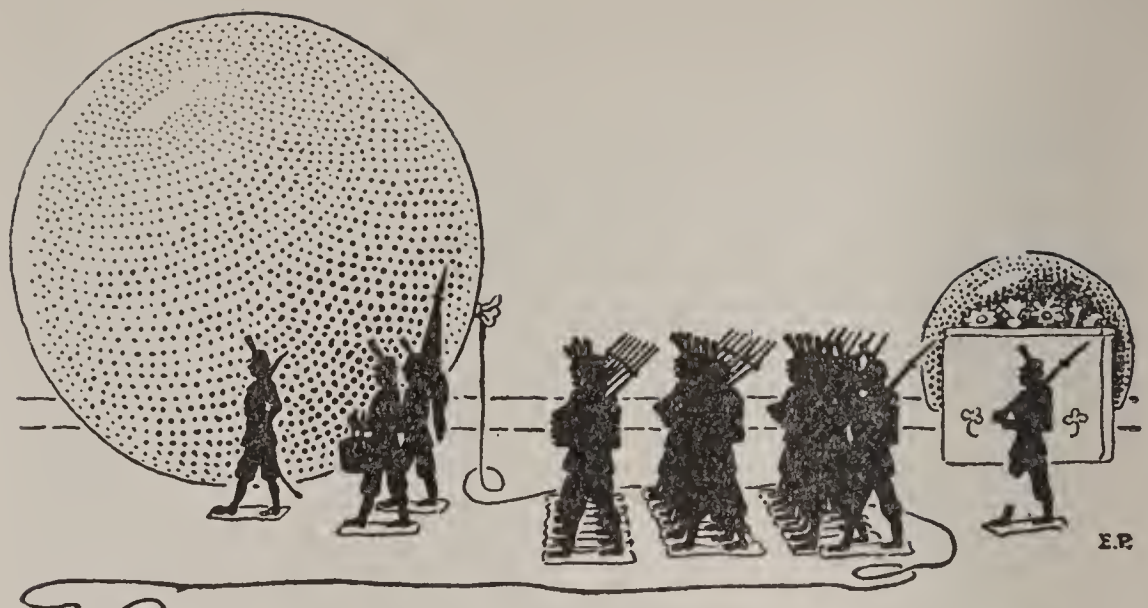
"But he has nothing on!" a little child cried out at last.

"Dear me, listen to what the innocent says," said the father, and people whispered to each other what the child had said.

"He has nothing on; a little child says that he has nothing on!"

"But he has nothing on!" everybody shouted at last. And the emperor shivered, for it seemed to him

that they were right; but he thought within himself, "I must go through with the procession." And so he carried himself still more proudly, and the chamberlains walked along holding the train which wasn't there at all.



The Steadfast Tin Soldier

THERE were once five and twenty tin soldiers; they were all brothers, for they had all been born of one old tin spoon. They shouldered their muskets, they looked straight in front of them, their uniform was red and blue, and very splendid. The first thing they heard in the world, when the lid was taken off their box, were the words "Tin soldiers!" That was shouted by a little boy who clapped his hands; the soldiers had been given to him, for it was his birthday; and now he put them on the table. Every soldier was the living image of all the rest, only one of them was a little different, he had one leg, for he had been cast last of all, and there hadn't been enough tin to finish him; but he stood as firmly on his one leg as the others on their two; and it was just this soldier who amounted to something.

On the table where they had been placed stood many other playthings, but the toy that struck the eye most

was a lovely castle of cardboard. Through the little windows one could see straight into the rooms. Outside the castle some little trees stood around a little looking-glass, which made believe it was a lake. Wax swans swam on this lake, and were mirrored in it. This was all very pretty; but the prettiest of all was a little lady, who stood at the open door of the castle; she was also cut out in paper, but she had a dress of the clearest gauze, and a little narrow blue ribbon over her shoulders, that looked like a scarf; and in the middle of this ribbon was a shining spangle as big as her whole face. The little lady stretched out both her arms, for she was a dancer; and then she lifted one leg so high that the tin soldier couldn't see it at all, and thought that, like himself, she had only one leg.

"That would be the wife for me," he thought, "but she is very grand. She lives in a castle, and I have only a box, and there are five and twenty of us in that. It is no place for her. But I must try to get acquainted with her."

And then he lay down at full length behind a snuff-box which was on the table; there he could easily watch the little dainty lady, who kept on standing on one leg without losing her balance.

When the evening came, all the other tin soldiers were put into their box, and the people in the house went to bed. Now the toys began to play at "visiting," and at "war," and "giving balls." The tin soldiers rattled in their box, for they wanted to join, but couldn't lift the lid. The nutcracker threw somersaults, and the pencil danced on the slate; there was so much noise that the canary woke up, and began to talk too, and even in verse. The only two who did not stir from their places were the tin soldier and the little dancer; she stood straight up on the point of one of her toes, and stretched out both her arms; and he was just as stead-

fast on his one leg; and he never turned his eyes away from her.

Now the clock struck twelve—and, bounce!—the lid flew off the snuffbox; but there was no snuff in it, but a little black goblin; it was a trick, you see.

"Tin soldier!" said the goblin, "will you keep your eyes to yourself?"

But the tin soldier pretended not to hear him.

"Just you wait till to-morrow!" said the goblin.

But when the morning came, and the children got up, the tin soldier was placed in the window; and whether it was the goblin or the draught that did it, all at once the window flew open, and the soldier fell head over heels out of the third story. It was a terrible trip! He turned his leg straight up, and stuck with his cap down and his bayonet between the paving-stones.

The servant and the little boy came down right away to look for him, but though they almost stepped on him they couldn't see him. If the soldier had cried out, "Here I am!" they would have found him; but he didn't think it was proper to scream when he was in uniform.

Now it began to rain; one drop bigger than the next, it was a regular downpour. When the rain was over, two street boys came along.

"Pipe that!" said one of them, "there's a tin soldier. He'll go for a sail."

And they made a boat out of a newspaper, and put the tin soldier in the middle of it; and so he sailed down the gutter, and the two boys ran beside him and clapped their hands. Mercy on us! how the waves rose in that gutter, and what a current! But then it had been a downpour. The paper boat rocked up and down, and sometimes turned around so quickly that the tin soldier trembled; but he remained steadfast, and never moved a muscle, but looked straight before him, and shouldered his musket.

All at once the boat went under a long board over the gutter, and it became as dark as if he had been in his box.

"Where am I going now?" he thought. "Well, I suppose that's the goblin's fault. Ah! if the little lady only sat here with me in the boat, it might be twice as dark for all I'd care."

Suddenly there came a big water rat, who lived under the drain.

"Have you a passport?" said the rat. "Give me your passport."

But the tin soldier kept still and held his musket tighter than ever.

The boat rushed on, and the rat after it. Ugh! how he gnashed his teeth, and shouted to sticks and straws.

"Stop him! Stop him! he hasn't paid toll—he hasn't shown his passport!"

But the current went faster and faster. The tin soldier could see the bright daylight where the board ended; but he heard a roaring noise, which might well frighten a bold man. Just think, where the board ended the gutter plunged right down into a big canal; and for him that would be as dangerous as for us to be carried down a big waterfall.

Now he was already so near it that he couldn't stop. The boat was carried out, the poor tin soldier stiffening himself as much as he could, no one should say that he blinked an eye. The boat whirled round three or four times, and was full of water to the very edge—it must sink. The tin soldier stood up to his neck in water, and the boat sank deeper and deeper, and the paper was going to pieces more and more; and now the water closed over the soldier's head. Then he thought of the pretty little dancer, and how he should never see her again; and now it sounded in the tin soldier's ears:

Danger, danger, warrior,
Death you must suffer.

And now the paper parted, and the tin soldier fell out; but at that moment he was swallowed by a big fish.

Oh, how dark it was in there! It was even worse than under the gutter board; and then it was very narrow too. But the tin soldier was steadfast, and lay at full length shouldering his musket.

The fish rushed around and went through the most terrible motions, but at last it got very quiet, and some-

thing flashed through it like lightning. The daylight shone quite clear, and there was a loud shout, "The tin soldier!" The fish had been caught, carried to market, bought, and taken into the kitchen, where the cook cut him open with a large knife. She seized the soldier round the body with two fingers, and carried him into the room, where all were anxious to see the remarkable man who had traveled around in the stomach of a fish; but the tin soldier wasn't at all proud. They placed him on the table, and there—well, what queer things do happen in the world! The tin soldier was in the very room where he had been before! He saw the same children, and the same toys stood on the table; and there was the pretty castle with the graceful little dancer. She was still standing on one foot with the other in the air. She was steadfast, too. That moved the tin soldier; he was very nearly weeping tin tears, but that wouldn't have been proper. He looked at her and she looked at him, but they didn't say anything.

Just then one of the little boys took and threw the tin soldier right into the stove, and he didn't say why he did it at all; it must have been the fault of the goblin in the snuffbox.

The tin soldier stood there all lighted up, and felt a heat that was terrible; but whether this heat was from the real fire or from love he did not know. The colors had entirely worn off him; but whether this was from the journey or from sorrow, nobody could tell. He looked at the little lady, she looked at him, and he was moved, he was melting; but he still stood steadfast, shouldering his musket. Then suddenly the door flew open, and the draught of air caught the dancer, and she flew like a sylph right into the stove to the tin soldier, and flashed up in a flame, and was gone. Then the tin

soldier melted down into a lump, and when the servant took the ashes out next day, she found him in the shape of a little tin heart. But of the dancer there was only the spangle left, and that was burned as black as coal.

The Wild Swans

FAR away, where the swallows fly when our winter comes, lived a king who had eleven sons, and one daughter named Elisa. The eleven brothers, princes they were, went to school with stars on their breasts and swords by their sides. They wrote with pencils of diamond on slates of gold, and recited from memory just as well as from the book; one could hear right away that they were princes. Their sister Elisa sat on

a little stool of plate glass, and had a picture book which had cost half the kingdom.

Oh, how very well off those children were, but it wasn't going to last.

Their father, who was king of the whole country, married a bad queen who did not love the poor children at all. They noticed it on the very first day. There was a grand entertainment in the whole palace, and the children played "visitors," but instead of getting all the cakes and roast apples they could manage, they only had some sand given them in a teacup, and were told that they might make believe that was something good.

Next week the queen boarded little Elisa out with some farmers in the country, and it wasn't long before she told the king so many falsehoods about the poor princes that he did not trouble himself any more about them.

"Fly out into the world and get your own living," said the wicked queen. "Fly like big birds without a voice."

But she couldn't do them as much harm as she would have liked, for they became eleven lovely wild swans. With a strange cry they flew out of the palace windows, over the park and into the wood.

It was still very early in the morning when they passed by the place where their sister Elisa lay asleep in the farmer's room. Here they hovered over the roof, turned their long necks, and beat their wings; but no one heard or saw it. They had to fly on, high up toward the clouds, far away into the wide world; there they flew into a big dark wood, which stretched away to the seashore.

Poor little Elisa stood in the farmer's house and played with a green leaf, for she had no other playthings. And she pricked a hole in the leaf, and looked through it up at the sun, and it seemed to her that she saw her brothers' clear eyes; each time the warm sun shone on her cheeks she thought of all their kisses.

Each day went like the other. When the wind swept through the big rose hedges outside the house, it seemed to whisper to them, "Who can be more beautiful than you?" But the roses shook their heads and answered, "Elisa!" And when the old woman sat in front of her door on Sunday and read in her hymn book, the wind turned the leaves and said to the book, "Who can be more pious than you?" and the hymn book said, "Elisa!" And what the rosebushes and the hymn book said was only the simple truth.

When she was fifteen years old she was to go home. And when the queen saw how beautiful she was, she was filled with spite and hatred. She would have been glad to change her into a wild swan, like her brothers, but she did not dare to do so at once, because the king wanted to see his daughter.

Early in the morning the queen went into the bath, which was built of white marble, and decked with soft cushions and the loveliest tapestry; and she took three toads and kissed them, and said to the first:

"Sit on Elisa's head when she comes into the bath, that she may be as dull and slow as you.—Sit on her forehead," she said to the second, "that she may be as ugly as you, and her father may not know her.—Rest on her heart," she whispered to the third, "that she may receive an evil mind and suffer pain from it."

Then she put the toads into the clear water, which at once turned a greenish color, called Elisa, undressed her, and let her step down into the water. And while Elisa ducked down, one of the toads sat on her hair, and the second on her forehead, and the third on her heart; but she didn't seem to notice it at all; and as soon as she rose, three red poppies were floating on the water. If the creatures hadn't been poisonous, and if the witch hadn't kissed them, they would have been changed into red roses. But at any rate they became flowers, because they had rested on the girl's head, and

forehead, and heart. She was too good and innocent for witchcraft to have power over her.

When the wicked queen saw that, she rubbed Elisa with walnut juice, so that the girl got quite dark brown, and smeared a stinking salve on her face, and let her beautiful hair get all tangled. It was impossible to recognize the pretty Elisa again.

When her father saw her he was really frightened, and said this wasn't his daughter. Only the watch-dog and the swallows would have anything to do with her; but they were poor creatures who had nothing to say.

Then poor Elisa wept, and thought of her eleven brothers who were all away. Sadly she stole out of the castle, and walked all day over field and moor till she came into a large wood. She did not know where she wanted to go, only she felt so sad and longed for her brothers; like herself they must have been driven out into the world and she would try to find them.

She had been only a short time in the wood when the night fell; she had lost all road and path, therefore she lay down on the soft moss, said her evening prayer, and leaned her head against the stump of a tree. It was very still, the air was mild, and in the grass and in the moss hundreds of glowworms gleamed like a green fire; when she lightly touched one of the twigs with her hand, the shining insects fell down on her like shooting stars.

The whole night long she dreamed of her brothers. They were children again playing together, writing with diamond pencils on golden slates, and looking at the beautiful picture book which had cost half the kingdom. But on the slates they weren't writing zeros and lines as before, but the brave deeds they had done, and all they had seen and experienced; and in the picture book everything was alive—the birds sang, and the people came out of the book and spoke with Elisa and her

brothers. But when the leaf was turned, they jumped back again right away so as not to get the pictures mixed.

When she woke up, the sun was already high. She couldn't really see it, for the tall trees spread their branches far and wide above her. But the sun's rays played up there like a waving golden gauze, all the green things sent out fragrance, and the birds almost sat on her shoulders. She heard the plashing of water; it was from a number of springs all flowing into a pool which had the nicest sandy bottom. It was surrounded by thick bushes, but in one place the deer had made a large opening, and here Elisa went down to the water. It was so clear, that if the wind hadn't stirred the branches and the bushes, so that they moved, one would have thought they were painted on the bottom of the lake, so clearly was every leaf mirrored, whether the sun shone through it or whether it lay in shadow.

When Elisa saw her own face she was terrified—so brown and ugly was she; but when she wetted her little hand and rubbed her eyes and her forehead, the white skin shone out again. Then she undressed and went down into the fresh water; in all this world there wasn't a more beautiful daughter of kings. And when she had dressed herself again and braided her long hair, she went to the bubbling spring, drank out of her cupped hand, and then wandered farther into the wood, not knowing where she went. She thought of her dear brothers, and thought of the good Lord who surely wouldn't forsake her; he let the wild wood apples grow to satisfy the hungry and he showed her a tree, with the boughs bending under the weight of the fruit. Here she took her midday meal, placed props under the boughs, and then went into the darkest part of the forest. There it was so still that she could hear her footsteps, and the rustling of every dry leaf which bent under her feet. Not one bird was to be seen, not one

ray of sunlight could find its way through the big dark boughs of the trees; the tall trunks stood so close together that when she looked before her it seemed as if close wooden bars surrounded her. Oh, here was a loneliness such as she had never known before!

The night was very dark. Not a single little glow-worm now shone from the moss. Sorrowfully she lay down to sleep. Then it seemed to her as if the branches of the trees parted above her head, and the good Lord looked down on her with gentle eyes and little angels peeped out from over his head and under his arms.

When the morning came, she did not know if it had really been so or if she had dreamed it.

She went a few steps forward, and then she met an old woman with berries in her basket, and the old woman gave her a few of them. Elisa asked her if she hadn't seen eleven princes riding through the wood.

"No," said the old woman, "but yesterday I saw eleven swans swimming in the river close by, with golden crowns on their heads."

And she led Elisa a little farther to a slope, and at the foot of this a little river wound its way. The trees on the edge stretched their long leafy branches across toward each other, and where their natural growth would not allow them to come together, the roots had torn out of the ground, and hung, mingled with the branches, over the water.

Elisa said good-by to the old woman, and went along the river to the place where the stream flowed out to the great open strand.

The whole wonderful sea lay before the young girl, but there wasn't one sail on it, and not a boat was to be seen. How would she get farther away? She looked at the innumerable little pebbles on the shore; the water had worn them all round. Glass, iron, stones, everything that was there had been formed by the water, although it was much softer than even her delicate hand.

"It keeps on rolling without getting tired and the hard things are made smooth; I will be just as untiring. I thank you for teaching me that, you clear rolling waves; my heart tells me that one day you will carry me to my dear brothers."

On the seaweed that had been washed up lay eleven white swan feathers, which she made into a bouquet. Drops of water lay on them, nobody could tell whether they were dewdrops or tears. The beach was lonely, but she didn't mind, for the sea kept on changing, more in a few hours than the fresh-water lakes in a whole year. If a big black cloud came it was as if the sea would say, "I can look angry, too;" and then the wind blew, and the waves put whitecaps on. But when the clouds gleamed red and the winds slept, the sea looked like a rose leaf; sometimes it became green, sometimes white. But however quietly it might rest, there was still a slight motion at the shore; the water rose gently like the breast of a sleeping child.

When the sun was just about to set, Elisa saw eleven wild swans, with crowns on their heads, flying toward the land; they swept along one after the other, so that they looked like a long white band. Then Elisa climbed up the slope and hid herself behind a bush. The swans alighted near her and beat their big white wings.

As soon as the sun had disappeared beneath the water, the swans' feathers fell off, and eleven handsome princes stood there, Elisa's brothers. She uttered a loud cry, for although they were much changed, she knew and felt that it must be they. And she sprang into their arms and called them by their names; and the princes were blissfully happy when they saw their little sister again; and they knew her, though she was now tall and beautiful. They laughed and they cried; and soon they understood how cruel their stepmother had been to them all.

"We brothers," said the eldest, "fly about as wild swans as long as the sun is in the sky, but as soon as

it sinks down we get our human form again. Therefore we must always take care that we have a resting place for our feet when the sun sets; for if at that moment we were flying up toward the clouds, we should sink down into the deep as men. We don't live here. On the other side of the sea there is a country just as beautiful as this, but it is a long way off. We must cross the great sea and on our path there is no island where we could pass the night, only a lonely little rock juts out in the middle of the sea; it is just large enough for us to rest on it side by side. If the waves are high, the water spurts far over us, but we thank God for the rock. There we pass the night in our human form; except for this rock we could never visit our beloved country, for we need two of the longest days in the year for our journey. Only once in each year is it granted to us to visit our home. For eleven days we may stay here and fly over the great wood, from where we can see the palace in which we were born and in which our father lives, and the high tower of the church where our mother lies buried. Here it seems to us as though the bushes and trees were our relatives; here the wild horses gallop across the plains, as we saw them do in our childhood; here the charcoal burner sings the old songs to which we danced as children; here is our fatherland; here we feel ourselves drawn, and here we have found you, our dear little sister. Two days more we may stay here; then we must away across the sea to a lovely country, but it is not our own. How can we take you with us? for we have neither ship nor boat."

"How can I save you?" asked the sister; and they talked nearly the whole night, only slumbering for a few hours.

She was awakened by the sound of the swans' wings above her head. Her brothers were again enchanted, and they flew in wide circles and at last far away; but

one of them, the youngest, stayed behind, and the swan laid his head in her lap, and she stroked his wings; and the whole day they were together. Toward evening the others came back, and when the sun had gone down they stood there in their own shapes.

"To-morrow we fly far away from here, and cannot come back until a whole year has gone by. But we cannot leave you this way! Are you brave enough to come with us? My arm is strong enough to carry you in the wood; and should not all our wings be strong enough to fly with you over the sea?"

"Yes, take me with you," said Elisa.

They spent the whole night in weaving a net of pliable willow bark and tough rushes; and it was large and strong. On this net Elisa lay down; and when the sun rose, and her brothers were changed into wild swans, they seized the net with their beaks, and flew with their beloved sister, who was still asleep, high up toward the clouds. The sunbeams fell right on her face, so one of the swans flew over her head, that his broad wings might overshadow her.

They were far away from the shore when Elisa woke up; she thought she was still dreaming, so strange did it seem to her to be carried high through the air and over the sea. By her side lay a branch with lovely ripe berries and a bunch of sweet-tasting roots. The youngest of the brothers had gathered them and placed them there for her. She smiled at him gratefully, for she recognized him; it was he who flew over her and shaded her with his wings.

They were so high that the first ship they saw beneath them seemed like a white seagull lying on the water. A big cloud stood behind them—it was a perfect mountain; and on it Elisa saw her own shadow and those of the eleven swans; there they flew on, gigantic in size. Here was a picture, a more splendid one than she had ever yet seen. But as the sun rose higher and

the cloud was left farther behind them, the floating shadowy images vanished away.

The whole day they flew onward through the air, like a whirring arrow, but their flight was slower than usual, for they had their sister to carry. The weather was threatening; the evening drew near; Elisa looked anxiously at the setting sun, for the lonely rock in the ocean could not be seen. It seemed to her as if the swans beat the air more strongly with their wings. Alas! it was her fault that they couldn't go faster. When the sun went down, they must become men and fall into the sea and drown. Then she prayed a prayer from the depths of her heart; but still she could see no rock. The dark clouds came nearer, strong gusts of wind announced a storm, the clouds were like one huge threatening wave, rolling forward as heavy as lead, and the lightning burst in flash after flash.

Now the sun just touched the edge of the sea. Elisa's heart trembled. Then the swans darted downward, so swiftly that she thought they were falling, but they hovered again. The sun was half hidden below the water. And now for the first time she saw the little rock beneath her, and it looked no larger than a seal might look, sticking its head above the water. The sun sank very fast; at last it was only like a star; and then her foot touched firm ground. The sun was quenched like the last spark in a piece of burned paper; her brothers were standing around her, arm in arm, but there was no more than just enough room for her and for them. The sea beat against the rock and went over them like a heavy shower; the sky gleamed with ever-flaming fire, and peal on peal the thunder rolled; but sister and brothers held each other by the hand, and sang a hymn which gave them comfort and courage.

In the dawn the air was pure and calm. As soon as the sun rose the swans flew away with Elisa from the island. The sea still ran high, and when they were

far up in the air it looked as if the white foam on the black and green sea was millions of swans floating on the water.

When the sun rose higher, Elisa saw before her, half floating in the air, a mountainous country with shining masses of ice on its hills, and in the midst of it rose a castle, looking a mile long, with row above row of daring columns, while beneath waved palm woods and grand flowers as large as mill wheels. She asked if this was the country where they were going, but the swans shook their heads, for what she saw was the gorgeous, ever-changing palace of Fata Morgana, and into this they might bring no human being. As Elisa gazed at it, mountains, woods, and castle fell down, and twenty proud churches, all alike, with high towers and pointed windows, stood before them. She thought she heard the organs sounding, but it was the sea she heard. When she was quite near the churches they changed to a fleet sailing beneath her, but when she looked down it was only sea mist drifting on the water. So the view kept changing for her, till at last she saw the real land for which they were bound. There rose lovely blue mountains, with cedar forests, cities, and palaces. Long before the sun went down she sat on a rock in front of a large cave overgrown with delicate green vines, it was like embroidered rugs.

"Now we shall see what you will dream of here tonight," said the youngest brother; and he showed her to her bedroom.

"I wish I could dream how to save you," she said.

And this thought was so vivid in her mind and she prayed so warmly to God for help, even in her sleep she kept on praying, and then it seemed to her as if she were flying high in the air to the cloudy palace of Fata Morgana; and the fairy came out to meet her, beautiful and radiant; and yet the fairy was quite like the old woman who had given her the berries in the wood,

and had told her of the swans with golden crowns on their heads.

"Your brothers can be saved," she said. "But have you courage and perseverance? It is true water is softer than your delicate hands, and yet it changes the shape of stones; but it doesn't feel the pain that your fingers will feel; it has no heart, and does not suffer the agony and torment you will have to endure. Do you see the stinging nettle which I hold in my hand? Many of the same kind grow around the cave in which you sleep; those only, and those that grow on churchyard graves, can be used, remember that. Those you must pluck, though they will burn your hands into blisters. Break these nettles to pieces with your feet, and you will have flax; of this you must braid and bind eleven shirts of mail with long sleeves; throw these over the eleven swans, and the charm will be broken. But remember well, from the moment you begin this work until it is finished, even though it should take years, you must not speak. The first word you speak will pierce the hearts of your brothers like a deadly dagger. Their lives hang on your tongue. Remember all this!"

And she touched her hand with the nettle; it was like a burning fire, and Elisa woke up with the pain. It was broad daylight; and close by the spot where she had slept lay a nettle like the one she had seen in her dream. She fell on her knees and thanked the good Lord, and went out of the cave to begin her work.

With her delicate hands she grasped the horrid nettles. They stung like fire, burning great blisters on her arms and hands; but she thought she would bear it gladly if she could only save her dear brothers. Then she bruised every nettle with her bare feet and twisted the green flax.

When the sun had set her brothers came, and they were frightened when they found her dumb. They thought it was some new sorcery of their wicked step-

mother's; but when they saw her hands, they understood what she was doing for their sake, and the youngest brother wept. And where his tears dropped she felt no more pain, and the burning blisters vanished.

She passed the night at her work, for she would have no peace till she had saved her dear brothers. The whole of the following day, while the swans were away, she sat alone, but never had time flown so quickly with her as now. One shirt of mail was already finished, and now she began the second.

Then a hunting horn sounded among the hills, and she was very frightened. The noise came nearer and nearer; she heard the barking dogs, and timidly she fled into the cave, bound into a bundle the nettles she had gathered and hackled, and sat on the bundle.

Just then a big dog came bounding out of the thicket, and then another, and another; they barked loudly, ran back, and then came again. Only a few minutes had gone before all the huntsmen stood before the cave, and the handsomest of them was the king of the country. He came forward to Elisa, for he had never seen a more beautiful girl.

"How did you come here, my pretty child?" he asked.

Elisa shook her head, for of course she couldn't speak —it would cost her brothers their salvation and their lives. And she hid her hands under her apron, so that the king might not see what she was suffering.

"Come with me," said he. "You mustn't stay here. If you are as good as you are beautiful, I will dress you in velvet and silk, and place the golden crown on your head, and you shall live in my richest castle."

And then he lifted her on his horse. She wept and wrung her hands; but the king said:

"I only wish for your happiness; one day you will thank me for this."

And then he galloped away among the mountains with her on his horse, and the hunters galloped at their heels.

When the sun went down, the splendid royal city lay before them, with its churches and cupolas; and the king led her into the castle, where great fountains plashed in the lofty marble halls, and where walls and ceilings boasted of paintings. But she had no eyes for all this—she only wept and mourned. Passively she let the women put royal robes on her, and weave pearls in her hair, and draw dainty gloves over her blistered fingers.

When she stood there in all her splendor, she was so dazzlingly beautiful that the court bowed deeper than ever. And the king chose her for his bride, although the archbishop shook his head and whispered that the pretty forest girl was certainly a witch, who blinded their eyes and led astray the heart of the king.

But the king didn't listen; he ordered music to be played, and the costliest dishes to be served, and the most beautiful maidens to dance before them. And she was led through fragrant gardens into gorgeous halls; but never a smile came on her lips or shone in her eyes; sorrow sat in them forever. Then the king opened a little room close by the place where she was to sleep. This chamber was decked with splendid green tapestry, and looked just like the cave in which she had been. On the floor lay the bundle of flax she had spun from the nettles, and under the ceiling hung the shirt of mail she had finished knitting. All these things one of the huntsmen had brought with him as curiosities.

"Here you may dream yourself back in your former home," said the king. "Here is the work which occupied you there, and now, in the midst of all your splendor, it will amuse you to think of that time."

When Elisa saw this that lay so near her heart, a smile played round her mouth and the blood came back in her cheeks. She thought of the salvation of her brothers and kissed the king's hand; and he pressed her to his heart, and let all the church bells announce the

wedding festival. The lovely dumb girl from the woods was the queen of the country.

Then the archbishop whispered evil words into the king's ear, but they did not sink into the king's heart. The marriage was to take place; the archbishop himself had to place the crown on her head, and with wicked spite he pressed the narrow circlet so tightly on her brow that it pained her. But a heavier ring lay around her heart—sorrow for her brothers; she did not feel the bodily pain. Her mouth was dumb, for a single word would cost her brothers their lives, but in her eyes lay deep love for the kind, handsome king, who did everything to please her. Her whole heart turned more and more toward him every day. Oh, if she could only have trusted her grief to him, could have told him her suffering. But dumb she had to be, dumb must she finish her work. Therefore at night she stole away from his side, and went quietly into the little room which was decorated like the cave, and knit one shirt of mail after another. But when she began the seventh she had no flax left.

She knew that in the churchyard nettles were growing that she could use; but she must pluck them herself, and how was she to get out there?

"Oh, what is the pain in my fingers to the anguish my heart suffers?" she thought. "I must venture it, and help will not be denied me!"

With a heart trembling as if she were planning an evil deed, she stole into the garden in the moonlight night, and went through the long avenues and through the deserted streets to the churchyard. There, on one of the broadest tombstones, she saw sitting a circle of lamias, hideous witches. They took off their rags, as if they were going to bathe; then with their long skinny fingers they clawed open the fresh graves, and snatched up the corpses and ate the flesh. Elisa had to pass close by them, and they fixed their evil eyes on her;

but she said her prayers and picked the burning nettles, and carried them home to the castle.

Only one person had seen her, and that was the archbishop. He was awake while the others slept. Now he felt sure he had been right, that all was not as it should be with the queen; she was a witch, and therefore she had bewitched the king and the whole people.

In the confessional he told the king what he had seen and what he feared; and when the hard words came from his mouth, the carved saints in the cathedral shook their heads, as though they wanted to say, "It is not true. Elisa is innocent!" But the archbishop explained this differently—he said they were bearing witness against her, and shaking their heads at her sinfulness. Then two heavy tears rolled down the king's cheeks; he went home with doubt in his heart, and at night he made believe he was asleep, but sleep didn't come near his eyes, for he noticed that Elisa got up. Every night she did this, and each time he followed her quietly, and saw how she disappeared into her chamber.

From day to day his face became darker. Elisa saw it, but did not understand the reason; but it frightened her—and what did she not suffer in her heart for her brothers? Her hot tears flowed on the royal velvet and purple; they lay there like sparkling diamonds, and all who saw the rich splendor wished they were the queen. In the meantime she had almost finished her work. Only one shirt of mail was still to be completed, but she had no flax left, and not a single nettle. Once more, for the last time, therefore, she must go to the churchyard, to pluck a few handfuls. She thought with terror of the lonely walk and of the horrible lamias, but her will was as firm as her trust in the good Lord.

Elisa went, but the king and the archbishop followed her. They saw her vanish into the churchyard through the wicket gate; and when they came near, the lamias were sitting on the gravestones as Eliza had seen them;

and the king turned aside, for he thought he saw her among them, she whose head had rested against his breast that very evening.

"The people must judge her," said he.

And the people condemned her to suffer death by fire.

Out of the gorgeous royal halls she was led into a dark, damp hole, where the wind whistled through the grated window; instead of velvet and silk they gave her the bundle of nettles which she had gathered; on this she could lay her head; and the hard burning shirts of mail which she had knitted were to be her coverlet. But nothing could have been given her that she liked better. She began her work again and prayed. Outside, the street boys were singing jeering songs about her, and not a soul comforted her with a kind word.

But toward evening a swan's wing beat against the grating. It was the youngest of her brothers. He had found his sister, and she sobbed aloud with joy, though she knew that the coming night would probably be the last she had to live. But now the work was almost finished, and her brothers were here.

The archbishop came now to stay with her in her last hour, for he had promised the king to do so. But she shook her head, and with looks and gestures she begged him to go, for in this night she must finish her work, or else all would be in vain, all her tears, her pain, and her sleepless nights. The archbishop went away saying spiteful things against her; but poor Elisa knew she was innocent, and continued her work.

The small mice ran around on the floor, and dragged nettles to her feet to help her even if it were ever so little; and a thrush perched beside the bars of the window and sang all night as merrily as it could, so that she might not lose heart.

It was still twilight; not till an hour afterward would the sun rise. And the eleven brothers stood at the castle gate, and demanded to be brought before the king. That

could not be, they were told, for it was still almost night; the king was asleep, and might not be disturbed. They begged, they threatened, and the sentries came, yes, even the king himself came out, and asked what was the meaning of this. At that moment the sun rose, and there were no brothers to be seen, but eleven wild swans flew away over the castle.

All the people came flocking out at the town gate, for they wanted to see the witch burned. A wretched old horse drew the cart on which she sat. They had put on her a smock of coarse sackcloth. Her lovely long hair hung loose about her beautiful head; her cheeks were as pale as death; and her lips moved silently, while her fingers were twisting the green flax. Even on the way to death she didn't stop the work she had begun; the ten shirts of mail lay at her feet, and she was knitting the eleventh. The mob jeered at her.

"Look at the witch muttering to herself! She hasn't even a hymn book in her hand; no, she sits there with her nasty deviltry—tear it into a thousand pieces!"

And they all pressed on her, and wanted to tear up the shirts of mail. Then eleven wild swans came flying and sat around her on the cart, and beat their great wings; and the mob gave way before them, terrified.

"That is a sign from heaven! She must be innocent!" whispered many. But they did not dare to say it aloud.

Now the executioner seized her by the hand; then she hastily threw the eleven shirts over the swans, and eleven handsome princes stood there. But the youngest had a swan's wing instead of an arm, for a sleeve was missing in his shirt—she had not quite finished it.

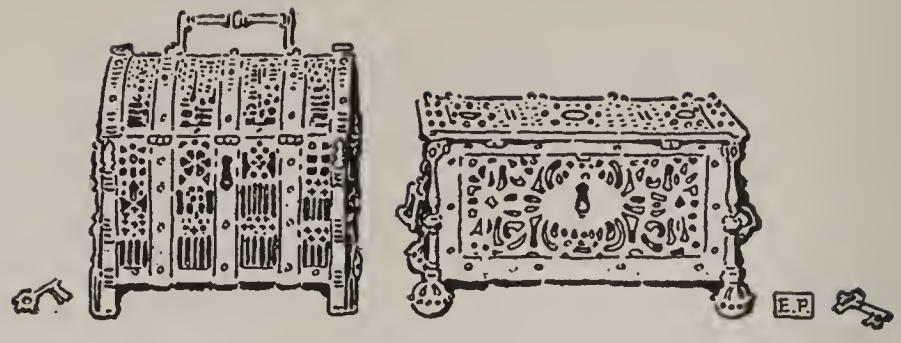
"Now I may speak!" she said. "I am innocent!"

And the people who saw what happened bowed before her as before a saint; but she sank fainting into her brothers' arms, such an effect had suspense, fear, and pain had on her.

"Yes, she is innocent," said the eldest brother.

And now he told everything that had taken place; and while he spoke a fragrance arose as of millions of roses, for every piece of faggot in the pile had taken root and grown branches; and a fragrant hedge stood there, tall and great, covered with red roses, and at the top a flower, white and shining, gleamed like a star. This flower the king plucked and placed in Elisa's bosom; and she woke up with peace and happiness in her heart.

And all the church bells rang themselves, and the birds came in large flocks, and there was a wedding procession back to the castle such as no king had ever seen.



The Swineherd

THERE was once a poor Prince. He had a very small kingdom, but then it was always large enough to marry on, and he did want to get married.

Now it was rather bold of him, of course, to dare to say to the Emperor's daughter, "Will you have me?" But he did dare it, for his name was famous far and wide. There were hundreds of princesses who would have said yes and thank you; but did *she* say so? Well, we shall see.

On the grave of the Prince's father there grew a rosebush, oh, such a lovely rosebush. It bloomed only every fifth year, and even then it was only one single rose, but that was a rose so sweet that whoever smelled it forgot all his troubles and trials. And then he had a nightingale, which could sing as if all lovely melodies sat in its little throat. This rose and this nightingale the Princess was to have, and therefore they were put into big silver cases and sent to her.

The Emperor let the presents be carried before him into the great hall where the Princess was playing "company" with her maids of honor (they didn't do anything else), and when she saw the big silver cases with the presents in them, she clapped her hands with joy.

"Oh, I hope it's a little pussycat!" she said.

But then out came the lovely rose.

"A very neat piece of work, indeed!" said all the court ladies.

"It is more than neat," said the Emperor, "it is nice!"

But the Princess felt it, and then she almost cried.

"Oh, how horrid, papa!" she said, "it's not artificial, it's real!"

"Oh, how horrid!" said all the court ladies, "it's real!"

"Let's see now what there is in the other case before we get angry," said the Emperor. And then the nightingale came out; it sang so beautifully that they couldn't say anything against it right away.

"*Superbe! charmant!*" said the maids of honor, for they all spoke French, one worse than the other.

"How that bird reminds me of the late Empress's little music box," said an old cavalier. "Dear me, it's the same tone, the same expression."

"Yes," said the Emperor; and then he wept like a little child.

"I wonder if that could possibly be real," said the Princess.

"Yes, it is a real bird," said they who had brought it.

"Then you can let that bird fly," said the Princess; and she would by no means allow the Prince to come.

But the Prince wasn't at all discouraged. He smudged his face brown and black, pulled his cap down over his eyes, and knocked at the door.

"How do you do, Emperor," he said, "couldn't I get a job here in the castle?"

"Well," said the Emperor, "ever so many people want jobs here, but, let me see, I want some one who can take care of the pigs, we have so many of them."

So the Prince was appointed Imperial swineherd. He got a miserable small room down by the pigsty, and here he had to stay; but all day long he sat and

worked, and when it was evening he had finished a neat little pot, with bells all around it, and as soon as the pot boiled then they tinkled so prettily and played the old melody:

Oh, my darling Augustine,
All is lost, all is lost.

But the artfulliest thing about it was that by holding one's finger in the steam from the pot, one could smell at once what food was being cooked on every stove in the town. That certainly was something different from a rose.

Now the Princess was out walking with all her maids of honor, and when she heard the melody she stood still and looked quite pleased; for she, too, could play "Oh, my darling Augustine." It was the only thing she could play, and she played it with one finger.

"Why, that's the one I play!" she cried. "He must be a refined swineherd! Do run in and ask him the price of that instrument."

So one of the maids of honor had to run in; but first she put on wooden shoes.

"What do you want for the pot?" said the lady.

"I want ten kisses from the Princess," said the swineherd.

"Mercy on us!" said the maid of honor.

"Well, I won't sell it for less," said the swineherd.

"Well, what did he say?" asked the Princess.

"I really can't say it, it is so awful," said the lady.

"Well, you can whisper it then." And the lady whispered it to her.—"But he's naughty," said the Princess; and she went away. But when she had gone a little way, the bells sounded so prettily—

Oh, my darling Augustine,
All is lost, all is lost.

"Listen," said the Princess, "ask him if he will take ten kisses from my maids of honor."

"No, thanks," said the swineherd, "ten kisses from the Princess, or I shall keep my pot."

"What a bore this is!" said the Princess. "But you'll have to stand around me so that nobody will see."

And the maids of honor stood around her, and then they spread out their dresses, and then the swineherd got the ten kisses, and she got the pot.

Well, then they had fun. The pot had to boil the whole evening and the whole day. They knew what was being cooked on every single stove in the town, both at the court chamberlain's and at the shoemaker's. The maids of honor danced and clapped their hands.

"We know who's going to have sweet soup and pancakes. We know who's going to have porridge and veal cutlets! How interesting that is!"

"Very interesting," said the head mistress of the ceremonies.

"Yes, but keep your mouth shut, for I'm the Emperor's daughter!"

"Mercy on us!" said they all together.

The swineherd, that is to say, the Prince—but of course they did not know but that he was a real swineherd—let no day pass by without doing something, and so he made a rattle; when anybody swung this rattle, it played all the waltzes, jigs, and polkas that have been known since the creation of the world.

"But that is *superbe!*" said the Princess, as she went past. "I have never heard a finer composition. Listen! run in and ask what the instrument costs; but no kisses!"

"He wants a hundred kisses from the Princess," said the maid of honor who had gone in to ask.

"I think he's crazy!" said the Princess; and she went away; but when she had gone a little way she stood still. "One must encourage art," she said. "I am the Emperor's daughter! Tell him he can have ten kisses, like yesterday, and he can take the rest from my maids of honor."

"Oh, but we hate to!" said the maids of honor.

"That's all nonsense!" said the Princess, "and if I can allow myself to be kissed, you can too; remember, I give you your board and keep."

And so the maid of honor had to go in and see him again.

"A hundred kisses from the Princess," he said, "or each shall keep his own."

"Stand around me," she said; and all the maids of honor stood around, and he began kissing.

"What can that crowd be down there by the pigsty?" said the Emperor, who had stepped out on the balcony. He rubbed his eyes, and put on his spectacles. "Why, it's the maids of honor, who are up to something; I shall have to go down to them."

And he pulled up his slippers behind, for they were shoes that he had trodden down at heel. Good gracious, how he hurried! When he came down in the courtyard, he went quite softly, and the maids of honor were too busy counting the kisses, so that everything would be fair and he wouldn't get too many or too few, that they didn't notice the Emperor. Then he stood on tiptoe.

"What's that?" he said, when he saw that there was kissing going on; and he hit them on the head with his slipper, just as the swineherd was taking the eighty-sixth kiss.

"Get out!" said the Emperor, for he was angry, and both the Princess and the swineherd were put out of his empire.

She stood there now and cried and the swineherd scolded and the rain poured down.

"Oh, what a miserable girl I am!" said the Princess; "if I had only taken the handsome Prince! Oh, how unhappy I am!"

Then the swineherd went behind a tree, washed the brown and black from his face, threw off the shabby

clothes, and stepped out in his royal robes, so handsome that the Princess had to curtsy to him.

"I have learned to despise you," he said. "You didn't want an honest Prince! You had no use for the rose and the nightingale, but you could kiss the swineherd for a toy! This serves you right, now!"

And then he went into his kingdom and shut the door and barred it, and then she could stand outside and sing:

Oh, my darling Augustine,
All is lost, all is lost!

The Nightingale

YOU know, of course, that in China the Emperor is a Chinaman, and all the people around him are Chinamen too. It happened a good many years ago, but that's just why it's worth while to hear the story, before it is forgotten. The Emperor's palace was the most splendid in the world; entirely and altogether made of porcelain, so costly, but so brittle, so difficult to handle that one had to be terribly careful. In the garden were to be seen the strangest flowers, and to the most splendid of them silver bells were tied, which tinkled so that nobody should pass by without noticing the flowers. Oh, the Emperor's garden had been laid out very smartly, and it extended so far that the gardener himself didn't know where the end was. If you went on and on, you came into the loveliest forest with high trees and deep lakes. The forest went right down to the sea, which was blue and deep; tall ships could sail right in under the branches of the trees; and in the trees lived a Nightingale, which sang so sweetly that even the poor fisherman, who had many other

things to do, stopped still and listened, when he had gone out at night to take up his nets, and then heard the Nightingale.

"Dear me, isn't that nice!" he said; but he had to attend to his business, and forgot the bird. But the next night when the bird sang again, and the fisherman was out there he said the same thing, "Dear me, isn't that very nice!"

From all the countries of the world travelers came to the city of the Emperor, and admired it, and the palace and the garden, but when they heard the Nightingale, they said, "That is the best of all!"

And the travelers told about it when they came home; and the learned men wrote many books about the city, the palace, and the garden. But they did not forget the Nightingale; that was placed highest of all; and those who were poets wrote the loveliest poems about the Nightingale in the forest by the deep sea.

The books went through all the world, and a few of them once came to the Emperor. He sat in his golden chair, and read, and read: every moment he nodded his head, for it pleased him to read the splendid descriptions of the city, the palace, and the garden. "But the Nightingale is the best of all," it stood written there.

"What's that?" said the Emperor. "The Nightingale! I don't know that at all! Is there such a bird in my empire, and even in my own garden? I've never heard of that. I had to find it in a book!"

And then he called his cavalier. This cavalier was so grand that if any one lower in rank than himself dared to speak to him, or to ask him any question, he answered nothing but "P!"—and that doesn't mean anything.

"They tell me that we have here a highly remarkable bird called a Nightingale!" said the Emperor. "They say it is the best thing in all my great empire. Why haven't I ever been told about this?"

"I have never before heard anybody mention it," said the cavalier. "It has never been presented at court."

"I command that it shall appear this evening, and sing before me," said the Emperor. "It seems that all the world knows what I possess, except myself."

"I have never heard it mentioned," said the cavalier. "I will look for it. I will find it."

But where was it to be found? The cavalier ran up and down all the stairs, through halls and corridors, but no one among all those whom he met had ever heard of the nightingale. And the cavalier ran back to the Emperor, and said that it must be a fable invented by the writers of books.

"Your Imperial Majesty mustn't believe the things people write; it's nothing but lies and something called the black art!"

"But the book in which I read this," said the Emperor, "was sent to me by the high and mighty Emperor of Japan, and therefore it cannot be a lie. I *will* hear the Nightingale! It must be here this evening! It has my imperial favor; and if it does not come, the whole court will be punched on the stomach after the court has eaten its supper!"

"Tsing-pe!" said the cavalier; and again he ran up and down all the stairs, and through all the halls and corridors; and half the court ran with him, because they didn't like being punched on the stomach.

Ever so many questions were asked about this remarkable Nightingale, which all the world knew excepting the people at court.

At last they met a poor little girl in the kitchen, who said:

"Heavens, yes, the Nightingale? I know it very well; yes, it certainly can sing! Every evening I am allowed to carry my poor sick mother the scraps from the table. She lives down by the strand, and when I walk back and am tired, and rest in the wood, then I hear the Nightin-

gale sing. And then the tears come into my eyes, and it is just as if my mother kissed me!"

"Little kitchen maid," said the cavalier, "I will get her a permanent appointment in the kitchen, with permission to see the Emperor dine, if she will lead us to the Nightingale, for it is announced for this evening."

So they all went out into the wood where the Nightingale usually sang; half the court went along. When they were in the midst of their journey a cow began to low.

"Oh!" said all the court cavaliers, "there it is! that's really a remarkable power in so small a creature! I have certainly heard it before."

"No, those are cows lowing!" said the little kitchen maid. "We are a long way from the place yet."

Now the frogs began to croak in the pool.

"Glorious!" said the Chinese court preacher. "Now I can hear it—it sounds just like little church bells."

"No, those are frogs," said the little kitchen maid. "But now I think we shall soon hear it."

And then the Nightingale began to sing.

"That is it!" said the little girl. "Listen, listen! and it's sitting there!"

And she pointed to a little gray bird up in the boughs.

"Is it possible?" said the cavalier. "I should never have thought it looked like that! How plain it looks! I suppose it lost its color at seeing so many aristocratic visitors."

"Little Nightingale!" called the little kitchen maid, quite loudly, "our gracious Emperor would so like you to sing for him."

"With the greatest pleasure!" said the Nightingale, and began to sing most delightfully.

"It sounds just like glass bells!" said the cavalier. "And look at its little throat, how it's working! It's strange we've never heard it before. It will have a great success at court."

"Shall I sing once more for the Emperor?" asked the Nightingale, for it thought the Emperor was present.

"My excellent little Nightingale," said the cavalier, "I have great pleasure in inviting you to a court festival this evening, when you shall enchant his High and Imperial Majesty with your *charmante* singing."

"My song sounds best in the green wood!" said the Nightingale; still it came willingly when it heard that the Emperor wanted it.

In the palace everything was wonderfully fixed up. The walls and the flooring, which were of porcelain, gleamed in the rays of thousands of golden lamps. The loveliest flowers, those that tinkled best, had been placed in the passages. There was a running to and fro, and a draught, and then all the bells rang so loudly that one could not hear oneself speak.

In the midst of the great hall, where the Emperor sat, a golden perch had been placed, on which the Nightingale was to sit. The whole court was there, and the little kitchen maid had been allowed to stand behind the door, as she had now received the title of a Regular Cook. All were in full dress, and all looked at the little gray bird, to which the Emperor nodded.

And the Nightingale sang so beautifully that the tears came into the Emperor's eyes, and the tears ran down over his cheeks; and then the Nightingale sang still more sweetly, so that its song went straight to the heart. The Emperor was so much pleased that he said the Nightingale should have his golden slipper to wear around its neck. But the Nightingale thanked him and said it had already had reward enough.

"I have seen tears in the Emperor's eyes—there is no richer treasure for me. An Emperor's tears have a strange power. I am rewarded enough!" And then it sang again with its marvelously sweet voice.

"Isn't it too darling?" said the ladies who stood around, and then they took water in their mouths to

gurgle when any one spoke to them. Then they thought they were nightingales too. And the lackeys and chambermaids reported that they were satisfied too; and that was saying a good deal, for they are the most difficult to please. In short, the Nightingale had a real success.

It was now to remain at court, to have its own cage, with liberty to go out twice every day and once at night. Twelve servants came along when the Nightingale went out, each of whom had a silken string fastened to the bird's leg, which they held very tight. There was really no pleasure in an excursion of that kind.

The whole city spoke of the remarkable bird, and when two people met, one said nothing but "Nightin," and the other said "gale"; and then they sighed, and understood one another. Eleven grocers' children were named after the bird, but not one of them could sing a note.

One day the Emperor received a large parcel, on which was written "The Nightingale."

"Here we have a new book about this celebrated bird," said the Emperor.

But it was not a book, but a little work of art, lying in a box, an artificial nightingale, which was supposed to look like the living one, but it was decorated with diamonds, rubies, and sapphires. So soon as the artificial bird was wound up, it could sing one of the pieces that the real one sang, and then its tail moved up and down, and glittered with silver and gold. Round its neck hung a little ribbon, and on that was written, "The Emperor of Japan's nightingale is poor compared to that of the Emperor of China."

"Isn't that lovely?" they all said, and he who had brought the artificial bird immediately received the title, Imperial Head-Nightingale-Bringer.

"Now they must sing together; what a duet that will be!"

And so they had to sing together; but it did not sound

very well, for the real Nightingale sang in its own way, and the artificial bird played a record.

"That's not its fault," said the music master, "it keeps perfect time and very much in my style."

Now the artificial bird was to sing alone. It made just as much of a hit as the real one, and then it was much handsomer to look at—it shone like bracelets and breastpins.

Three and thirty times over it sang the same piece, still it was not tired. The people would gladly have heard it again, but the Emperor said that the living Nightingale ought to sing something now. But where was it? No one had noticed that it had flown away out of the open window, back to the green wood.

"But what in all the world is this?" said the Emperor.

And all the courtiers scolded the Nightingale, and declared that it was a very ungrateful creature.

"We have the best bird, after all," they said.

And so the artificial bird had to sing again, and that was the thirty-fourth time that they listened to the same piece, but still they didn't know it quite by heart, for it was so very difficult. And the music master praised the bird very highly; yes, he declared that it was better than the real Nightingale, not only with regard to its plumage and the many beautiful diamonds, but inside as well.

"For you see, ladies and gentlemen, and above all, your Imperial Majesty, with a real Nightingale one can never calculate what is coming, but in this artificial bird everything is settled. It is this way, and no other! One can explain it; one can open it and show how it's almost human; show where the records are, and how they play and how one thing depends on another—!"

"That's just what I was thinking," they all said.

And the speaker received permission to show the bird to the people on the next Sunday. The people were to hear it sing, too, the Emperor commanded; and they

did hear it, and were as much pleased as if they had all got gay by drinking tea, for that's quite the Chinese fashion; and they all said, "Oh!" and held up their forefingers and nodded. But the poor fisherman who had heard the real Nightingale said:

"It sounds pretty enough, and it sounds like the other, but there's something missing; I don't know what it is."

The real Nightingale was banished from the country. The artificial bird had its place on a silken cushion close to the Emperor's bed; all the presents it had received, gold and precious stones, lay around it; in title it had advanced to be the High Imperial Night-Table-Singer, and in rank to number one on the left; for the Emperor considered that side the most important on which the heart is placed, and even in an Emperor the heart is on the left side; and the music master wrote a work of five-and-twenty volumes about the artificial bird; it was very learned and very long, full of the most difficult Chinese words; but still everybody said that they had read it and understood it, because otherwise they would have been stupid and would have had their stomachs punched.

So a whole year went by. The Emperor, the Court, and all the other Chinese knew every little gurgle in the artificial bird's song by heart. And that was just why they liked it, then they could sing it too, and so they did. The street boys sang, "Tsi-tsi-tsi-glug-glug!" and the Emperor himself sang it too! Oh, it was certainly wonderful!

But one evening, when the artificial bird was singing its best, and the Emperor lay in bed listening to it, something inside the bird said, "Whizz!" Something cracked. "Whir-r!" All the wheels ran round, and then the music stopped.

The Emperor jumped out of bed right away and sent for his own doctor; but what could he do? Then they

sent for a watchmaker, and after a good deal of talking and looking, the bird was put into something like order; but the watchmaker said that the bird must be carefully treated, for the pivots were worn, and it would be impossible to put new ones in in such a manner that the music would go. There was great lamentation; only once in a year was it permitted to let the bird sing, and that was almost too much. But then the music master made a little speech, full of the difficult words, and said it was just as good as before—and so of course it was as good as before.

Now five years had gone by, and a real grief came on the whole nation. The Chinese did, after all, like their Emperor very much, and now he was ill, and they said he couldn't live much longer. Already a new Emperor had been chosen, and the people stood out in the street and asked the cavalier how their old Emperor was.

"P!" he said, and shook his head.

Cold and pale the Emperor lay in his big gorgeous bed; the whole court thought him dead, and each one ran to bow to the new Emperor. The chamberlains ran out to talk it over, and the ladies' maids had a large coffee party. Everywhere, in all the halls and passages, cloth had been laid down so that no footstep could be heard, and therefore it was so still, so still. But the Emperor was not dead yet; stiff and pale he lay on the gorgeous bed with the long velvet curtains and the heavy gold tassels; high up, a window stood open, and the moon shone in on the Emperor and the artificial bird.

The poor Emperor could scarcely breathe; it was just as if something sat on his chest; he opened his eyes, and then he saw that it was Death who sat on his chest, and had put on his golden crown, and held in one hand the Emperor's gold sword, and in the other his beautiful banner. And all around, from the folds of the big velvet bed curtains, strange heads peered forth; some ugly, others lovely and mild. These were all the Em-

peror's bad and good deeds looking at him now that Death sat on his heart.

"Do you remember this?" whispered one after the other, "Do you remember that?" and then they told him so much that the sweat ran from his forehead.

"I never knew that!" said the Emperor. "Music! music! the big Chinese drum!" he called, "so that I won't hear everything they say!"

And they kept on, and Death nodded like a Chinaman to all they said.

"Music! music!" cried the Emperor. "My blessed little golden bird, sing, sing! I have given you gold and costly presents; I have even hung my golden slipper around your neck—sing now, sing!"

But the bird stood still; no one was there to wind it up, and it couldn't sing without that; but Death kept on looking at the Emperor with his great hollow eyes, and all was so still, so terribly still.

Just then the loveliest song sounded close by the window. It was the little live Nightingale, that sat outside on a spray. It had heard of the Emperor's danger, and had come to sing to him of comfort and hope. And as it sang, the specters grew paler and paler; the blood ran quicker and quicker through the Emperor's weak body; and even Death listened, and said:

"Go on, little Nightingale, go on!"

"But will you give me that splendid golden sword? Will you give me that rich banner? Will you give me the Emperor's crown?"

And Death gave up each treasure for a song. And the Nightingale sang on and on; and it sang of the quiet churchyard where the white roses grow, where the elder blossom smells sweet, and where the fresh grass is moistened by the tears of survivors. Then Death felt a longing for his garden, and floated like a cold white mist out of the window.

"I thank you, thank you!" said the Emperor. "You heavenly little bird! I know you well. I drove you from my country, and yet you have sung away the evil faces from my bed, and taken Death from my heart! How can I reward you?"

"You have rewarded me!" said the Nightingale. "I have drawn tears from your eyes, when I sang the first time—I shall never forget that. Those are the jewels that do a singer's heart good. But now sleep and grow fresh and strong again. I will sing for you."

And it sang, and the Emperor fell into a sweet sleep. Ah, how mild and refreshing that sleep was! The sun shone on him through the windows, when he woke up strong and well; not one of his servants had come back yet, for they all thought he was dead; only the Nightingale still sat beside him and sang.

"You must always stay with me," said the Emperor. "You shall sing only when you please; and I'll break the artificial bird into a thousand pieces."

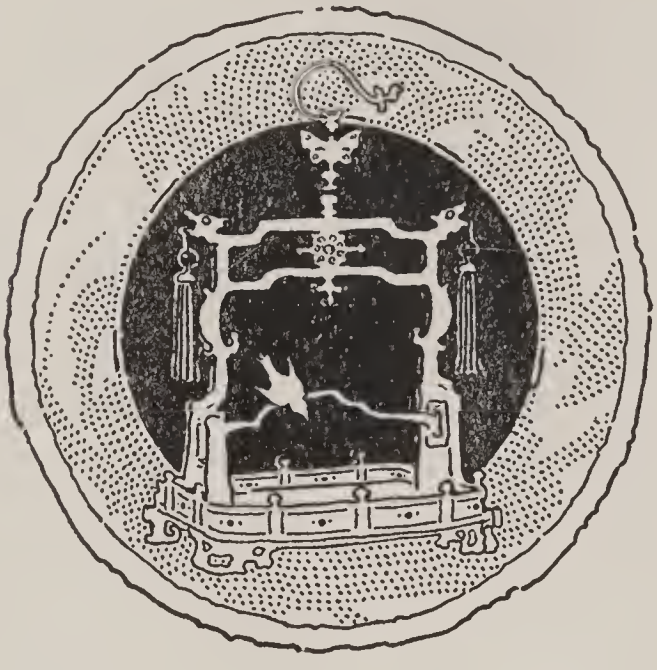
"Don't do that," said the Nightingale. "It did as well as it could; keep it as you have done till now. I cannot live in the palace, but let me come when I want to; then I will sit in the evening on the branch there by the window, and sing you something, so that you may be glad and thoughtful at once. I will sing of those who are happy and of those who suffer. I will sing of the good and the evil that people hide around you. The little singing bird flies far around, to the poor fisherman, to the peasant's roof, to every one who dwells far away from you and your court. I love your heart more than your crown, and yet the crown has something holy about it. I will come, I will sing to you—but one thing you must promise me."

"Everything!" said the Emperor; and he stood there in his imperial robes, which he had put on himself, and pressed the sword which was heavy with gold to his heart.

"One thing I beg of you: tell no one that you have a little bird who tells you everything. Then things will be even better."

And the Nightingale flew away.

The servants came in to look at their dead Emperor, and—well, there they were, and the Emperor said "Good morning!"



The Ugly Duckling

IT was perfectly lovely out in the country; it was summer. The corn was yellow, the oats were green, the hay stood in stacks down in the green meadows and there the stork was walking around on his long red legs and talking Egyptian, because he had learned that language from his mother. Around field and meadow were big woods, and deep lakes were in the middle of the woods; it was really lovely out in the country!

Right in the sunshine lay an old manor, surrounded by deep canals, and from the wall down to the water grew big burdock leaves, so high that little children could stand upright under the tallest of them. It was just as wild there as in the thickest wood. Here sat a duck on her nest, hatching out her little ducklings, but now she was almost tired of it, because it took such a long time; and then she so seldom had visitors. The other ducks liked better to swim around in the canals than to run up to sit down under a burdock, and gossip with her.

At last one eggshell after another began to crack. "Piep! piep!" it said in them; all the egg yolks were alive and stuck out their heads.

"Quack! quack!" she said; and they all came tumbling out as fast as they could, looking all round them under the green leaves; and the mother let them look as much as they wanted to, for green is good for the eyes.

"How big the world is!" said the young ones, for they certainly had much more room now than when they were in the eggs.

"Do you think this is all the world?" asked the mother. "It reaches away past the other side of the garden, right into the minister's field, but I have never been there. I hope you are all here now," and then she stood up. "No, I haven't got you all. The largest egg is still lying there. How long is that going to last? I am really tired of it." And she sat down again.

"Well, how goes it?" asked an old duck who had come to pay her a visit.

"It takes a long time with that one egg," said the duck who sat there. "It won't crack, but I'll show you the others now; they're the loveliest ducklings I ever saw. They are all like their father, the wretch! he never comes to see me."

"Let me see that egg that won't crack," said the old duck. "I tell you it's a turkey egg. I was fooled that way once too, and I had my troubles and trials with those young ones, because they're afraid of the water, let me tell you! I couldn't get them out. I quacked and snapped but it didn't help. Let me see the egg. Yes, that's a turkey egg! You just let that lie there, and teach the other children to swim."

"I think I will sit on it a little longer," said the duck. "I've sat so long now that I can sit a few days more."

"Just as you please," said the old duck; and she went away.

At last the big egg cracked. "Piep! piep!" said the

little one, and rolled out; it was so large and so ugly. The duck looked at it.

"What a terribly big duckling that is," she said; "none of the others look like that. I wonder could it really be a turkey chick? Well, we'll soon find that out. Into the water it must go, even if I have to kick it in myself."

The next day the weather was simply lovely, and the sun shone on all the green burdocks. The mother duck went down to the water with her whole family. Splash, she jumped into the water. "Quack! quack!" she said, and one duckling after another plunged in. The water closed over their heads, but they came up in an instant, and floated beautifully; their legs went of themselves, and there they were all in the water, even the ugly gray one was swimming too.

"No, it's not a turkey," she said, "look how well it uses its legs, and how straight it holds itself. It is my own child. On the whole it's quite pretty, if one really looks at it. Quack! quack! come with me, and I'll lead you out into the great world, and present you in the duck yard; but keep close to me, so that nobody will step on you, and look out for the cat!"

And so they came into the duck yard. There was a terrible noise there, for two families were fighting about an eel's head, and the cat got it after all.

"Well, that's the way of the world!" said the mother duck; and she licked her beak, for she, too, wanted the

eel's head. "Use your legs, now," she said. "Step lively and bow your necks to the old duck over there! She's the grandest person here, her family is Spanish, that's why she's fat, and do you see the red rag she's wearing around her leg? That's something very, very wonderful; it's the greatest distinction any duck can get; it means that people don't want to lose her and that she's to be recognized by man and beast. Step lively now—don't turn in your toes; a well-brought-up duck turns its toes way out, just like father and mother, so! Now bend your necks and say 'Quack!' "

And they did so; but the other ducks round about looked at them, and said right out loud:

"Look there! now we're going to have that mob too, as if there weren't enough of us already. And—pfui! what a funny looking duckling that one there is; we won't stand him!" And one duck flew over at once, and bit it in the neck.

"Let him alone," said the mother, "he doesn't do anybody any harm."

"Yes, but he's too large and peculiar," said the duck who had bitten it, "and so we'll have to show him!"

"Mother has some pretty children there," said the old duck with the rag round her leg. "They're all pretty but that one; that was a failure. I wish she could make it over again."

"Can't be done, your Grace," said the mother duck: "he isn't pretty, but he has a lovely disposition and swims as well as any other; I may even say he swims better. I think he'll grow up pretty, and become smaller in time; he lay too long in the egg, and so he wasn't shaped right." And then she patted it on the neck, and smoothed its feathers. "Anyway, he's a drake," she said, "and so it doesn't make much difference. I think he will be very strong: he will make his way all right."

"The other ducklings are charming!" said the old

duck. "Make yourselves at home; and if you find an eel's head, you may bring it to me."

And so they made themselves at home. But the poor Duckling who came out of the egg last, and looked so ugly, was bitten and pushed and made fun of, both by the ducks and by the chickens.

"He's too big!" they all said. And the turkey-cock, who had been born with spurs, and therefore thought he was an emperor, blew himself up like a ship in full sail, and went right up to him; then he gobbled, and got quite red in the face. The poor Duckling didn't know where to go; it was so sad because it looked ugly, and was made fun of by the whole yard.

That was how the first day went; and afterward it got worse and worse. The poor Duckling was chased by everybody; even its brothers and sisters were horrid to it and always said, "I hope the cat takes you, you

awful sight!" And the mother said, "If you were only far away!" And the ducks bit him, and the chickens pecked at him, and the girl who had to feed the poultry kicked at him with her foot.

Then he ran and flew over the fence, and the little birds in the bushes flew up in fear.

"That is because I am so ugly!" thought the Duckling; and shut its eyes, but ran away anyhow, and so it came out into the big marsh, where the wild ducks lived. Here it lay the whole night long; and it was so tired and so sad.

Toward morning the wild ducks flew up, and looked at their new companion.

"What might you be?" they asked; and the Duckling turned in every direction, and bowed as well as it could. "You are remarkably ugly!" said the wild ducks. "But that's all the same to us, so long as you do not marry into our family."

Poor thing! he certainly wasn't thinking of marrying; all he wanted was to lie among the reeds and drink some of the swamp water.

He lay there two whole days; then two wild geese came, or, properly speaking, two wild ganders. They had come out of the egg only a little while ago, and that's why they were so lively.

"Listen, comrade," said one of them. "You're so ugly that I like you. Come along with us and be a bird of passage? Near here, in another marsh, there are some sweet, lovely wild geese, all unmarried, and all able to say 'Quack!' You've a chance of making your fortune, you're so ugly!"

"Piff! paff!" resounded through the air; and the two ganders fell down dead in the swamp, and the water got blood-red. "Piff! paff!" it sounded again, and whole flocks of wild geese rose up from the reeds. And then there was another crash. A big hunt was going on. The hunters were lying in wait

all around the marsh, and some were even sitting up in the branches of the trees, which spread far over the reeds. The blue smoke rose up like clouds among the dark trees, and hung far across the water; and the hunting dogs came—splash, splash!—into the mud, and the rushes and the reeds bent down on every side. It was a terrible scare for the poor Duckling! It turned its head to put it under its wing; but at that moment a dreadfully big dog stood close by. His tongue hung far out of his mouth and his eyes gleamed horrible and ugly; he put his jaws right down to the Duckling, showed his sharp teeth, and—splash, splash! —on he went, without seizing it.

"Oh, Heaven be thanked!" sighed the Duckling. "I am so ugly that even the dog doesn't want to bite me!"

And so it lay quite quiet, while the bullets rattled through the reeds and shot after shot crashed out. At last, late in the day, it was quiet; but the poor Duckling did not dare to get up; it waited several hours before it looked around, and then it hurried away from the marsh as fast as it could. It ran on over field and meadow; the wind blew so much it could hardly go against it.

Toward evening it came to a poor little farmhouse; it was such a wretched little house that it didn't know what side to fall on, and so it kept on standing. The storm whistled round the Duckling, so much that he had to sit right down on his tail to keep from falling, and it got worse and worse. Then he noticed that the door had slipped off one of its hinges and hung so crooked that he could slip into the room through the crack, and he did.

Here lived an old woman, with her Cat and her Hen. And the Cat, whom she called Sonnie, could arch his back and purr, he could even give out sparks; but for that one had to stroke his fur the wrong way. The Hen had very little short legs, and therefore she was

called Clucky-shortlegs; she laid good eggs, and the woman loved her as her own child.

In the morning they saw the strange Duckling right away, and the Cat began to purr, and the Hen to cluck.

"What's this?" said the woman, and looked all around; but she couldn't see well, and so she thought the Duckling was a fat duck that had lost its way. "Isn't this a nice catch?" she said. "Now I shall have duck's eggs. I hope it is not a drake. We must try that."

And so the Duckling was admitted on trial for three weeks; but no eggs came. And the Cat was master of the house, and the Hen was the lady, and they always said "We and the world!" for they thought they were half the world, and by far the better half. The Duckling thought one might have a different opinion, but the Hen wouldn't stand for that.

"Can you lay eggs?" she asked.

"No."

"Then you'll please to hold your tongue."

And the Cat said, "Can you curve your back, and purr, and sparkle?"

"No."

"Then you'd better not offer any opinions when sensible people are speaking."

And the Duckling sat in a corner feeling very badly; then it happened to think about fresh air and sunshine; and it was seized with such a strange longing to float on the water, and at last it couldn't help itself; it had to tell the Hen.

"What's the matter with you?" asked the Hen. "You have nothing to do, that's why you get these notions. Purr or lay eggs, and they will go away."

"But it's so lovely to float on the water!" said the Duckling, "so lovely to let it close over the head, and to dive down to the bottom."

"Yes, that must certainly be a great pleasure!" said the Hen. "I think you must have gone crazy. Ask the Cat about it,—he's the cleverest thing I know,—ask him if he likes to float on the water, or to dive down; I won't speak about myself. Ask our mistress, the old woman; no one in the world is cleverer than she. Do you think she wants to float, and to get water over her head?"

"You don't understand me," said the Duckling.

"Well, if we don't understand you I'd like to know who does! You surely don't want to set yourself up to be wiser than the cat or the woman, not to mention myself! Don't put on airs, child! You'd better thank your Maker for all the good people have done for you. Didn't you get into a warm room, and into company from which you may learn something? But you're a chatterbox, and it is not pleasant to associate with you. You may believe me, I'm saying this for your own good. I tell you disagreeable things, and that's the only way of knowing one's true friends! Just learn to lay eggs, now, or to purr or to sparkle!"

"I think I will go out into the wide world," said the Duckling.

"Yes, do go," said the Hen.

And the Duckling went away. It floated on the water, and dived, but it was looked down on by every animal because of its ugliness.

Now came the autumn. The leaves in the forest turned yellow and brown; the wind sent them dancing around and there was a high chill in the air. The clouds hung heavy with hail and snowflakes, and on the fence stood the raven, screaming with the cold; it was enough to make one freeze to think of it. The poor little Duckling certainly had a very bad time. One evening —the sun was just setting most beautifully—a whole flock of big handsome birds came out of the bushes; the Duckling had never before seen anything so beau-

tiful; they were dazzlingly white, with long flexible necks; they were swans. They uttered a very strange cry, spread their large, splendid wings, and flew away from that cold country to warmer lands, to open lakes. They mounted so high, so high, that the ugly little Duckling had a very strange sensation; it turned round and round in the water like a wheel, stretched out its neck toward them, and gave a cry so loud and queer that it frightened itself. Oh! it could not forget those lovely birds, those happy birds; and when it couldn't see them any more it dived down to the very bottom, and when it came up again it was quite beside itself. It didn't know the name of those birds, and didn't know where they were flying; but it loved them more than it had ever loved any one. It didn't envy them at all, it wouldn't have dared to think of wishing such beauty for itself; it would have been happy even if only the ducks would have let it live among them, the poor ugly creature!

And the winter was so cold, so cold! The Duckling had to swim around in the water, to keep it from freezing entirely; but every night the hole in which it swam became smaller and smaller. It froze so hard that the ice cracked; and the Duckling had to use its legs all the time to keep the hole from freezing up. At last it became too tired, and lay quite still, and froze fast into the ice.

Early in the morning a farmer came by, and when he saw what had happened, he took his wooden shoe, broke the ice crust to pieces, and carried the Duckling home to his wife. Then it came to itself again. The children wanted to play with it; but the Duckling thought they would hurt it, and in its terror fluttered up into the milk pan, so that the milk spurted into the room. The woman screamed and clapped her hands, at which the Duckling flew down into the butter tub, and then into the meal barrel and out again. Well, what

a sight! The woman screamed, and struck at it with the fire tongs; the children tumbled over one another, trying to catch the Duckling; and they laughed and they screamed! It was a good thing that the door was open and it could rush out among the bushes in the newly-fallen snow; and there it lay quite exhausted.

But it would be too sad to tell all the want and misery the Duckling had to endure in the hard winter. . . . It lay out on the swamp among the reeds, when the sun began to shine again; the larks sang—it was beautiful spring.

Then all at once the Duckling raised its wings: they beat the air more strongly than before, and bore it strongly away; and before it really knew how all this happened, it was in a large garden, where the apple trees stood in blossom, where the lilac flowers smelt sweet, and hung their long green branches down to the winding canals. Oh, it was so beautiful here, so fresh and springlike! and out from the thicket came three lovely white swans; they rustled their wings, and floated so lightly on the water. The Duckling knew the splendid creatures, and felt a strange sadness.

"I will fly over to them, the royal birds! and they will kill me, because I, that am so ugly, dare to come near them. But I don't care! Better to be killed by them than to be plucked at by the ducks and pecked at by the chickens and kicked around by the girl who takes care of the duck yard, and to suffer hardships in winter!" And it flew out into the water, and swam toward the splendid swans; these looked at it, and came sailing toward it, ruffling their wings. "Yes, kill me!" said the poor creature, and bent its head down on the water, and waited for death. But what was this that it saw in the clear water? Below it, it saw its own image, but it was no longer a clumsy dark gray bird, hideous and ugly; it was itself a swan.

To be born in a duck yard doesn't make any difference, if one has only lain in a swan's egg.

It was really happy to have suffered all that want and misery, because this made it able to appreciate all the more the luck and loveliness that now greeted it. And the big swans swam around it, and stroked it with their beaks.

Some little children came into the garden; they threw bread and corn in the water; and the youngest cried, "There is a new one!" and the other children shouted joyously, "Yes, a new one has come!" And they clapped their hands and danced around, and ran to get their father and mother; and they threw bread and cake in the water; and they all said, "The new one is the most beautiful of all! so young and handsome!" and the old swans bowed their heads before it.

Then it felt quite shy, and hid its head under its wings; it hardly knew what to do; it was too happy, but not a bit conceited, because a good heart is never conceited. It thought of how it had been persecuted and mocked at, and now it heard everybody say that it was the loveliest of all lovely birds. And the lilacs bent their branches right down in the water to it, and the sun shone so warm and mild, then it fluffed its feathers, lifted its slender neck, and from its heart came a cry of joy:

"I didn't dream of so much happiness, when I was the ugly Duckling!"

E.P.

The Snow Queen

IN SEVEN STORIES

FIRST STORY—
WHICH TREATS OF THE MIRROR AND THE PIECES OF IT

WELL, now we're going to begin. When we are at the end of the story we shall know more than we do now, for he was a bad troll. He was one of the very worst, for he was the devil himself. One day he was in very good humor, for he had made a mirror which had this peculiarity, that everything good and beautiful which was mirrored in it shrank into almost nothing, but whatever was worthless and looked ugly was very distinct and looked worse than ever. The most lovely landscapes seen in this mirror looked like boiled spinach, and the nicest people were hideous, or stood on their heads and had no stomachs; their faces were so twisted that you wouldn't know them, and anybody who had a freckle could be sure it would cover both nose and mouth. That was very

amusing, the devil said. When a good, pious thought passed through the person's mind, a grin came in the mirror, so that the devil chuckled at his artistic invention. Those who went to the troll school—for he kept a troll school—declared everywhere that a miracle had happened. For now, they said, one could see, for the first time, how the world and the people in it really looked. They ran about with the mirror, and at last there was not a single country or person that hadn't been twisted in it. Now they wanted to fly up to heaven, to sneer and scoff at the angels and Our Lord themselves. The higher they flew with the mirror, the more it grinned; they could scarcely hold on to it. They flew higher and higher, and then the mirror trembled so terribly with its grinning that it fell down out of their hands to the earth, where it was shattered into a hundred million billion and more pieces. And now this mirror made much more unhappiness than before; for some of the pieces were hardly as large as a grain of sand and these flew around in the wide world, and whenever they flew into any one's eye they stuck there, and those people saw everything wrongly, or had only eyes for the bad side of a thing, for every little piece of the mirror had kept the same power which the whole glass had had. A few persons even got a piece of the mirror into their hearts, and this was perfectly awful, that heart got to be like a lump of ice. Some of the pieces were so large that they were used as windowpanes, but it was a bad thing to look at one's friends through these panes; other pieces were made into spectacles, and then things went wrong when people put those spectacles on and wanted to see very clearly and to be very just. The Evil One laughed then till his stomach cracked, and that tickled him so nicely. But out in the world some little pieces of glass were still flying around in the air. We'll hear about that now!

SECOND STORY—
A LITTLE BOY AND A LITTLE GIRL

IN the big city, where there are so many houses and so many people that there isn't room enough for every one to have a little garden, and where therefore most people have to be satisfied with some flowers in flowerpots, there were two poor children anyway, who had a garden a little larger than a flowerpot. They were not brother and sister, but they loved each other just as much as if they had been. Their parents lived right close to each other in two garrets, and there where the roof of the one house joined that of the other's, and where the gutter ran along the eaves, there was a little window in each house; one had only to step across the gutter to get from one window to the other.

Each family had a big box outside, and in that they grew kitchen herbs that they used, and a little rosebush; there was one in each box, and they grew beautifully. Now, the parents thought of placing

the boxes across the gutter, so that they reached from one window to another, and looked just like two banks of flowers. The peas hung down over the boxes, and the rosebushes grew long branches, which clustered around the windows and bent down toward each other: it was almost like an honor gate of flowers and leaves. As the boxes were very high, and the children knew that they mustn't climb up there, they were often allowed to come out between the boxes, and to sit on their little benches under the roses, and there they had a wonderful time playing.

In the winter that fun stopped. The windows were sometimes frozen all over. But then they warmed copper pennies on the stove, and held the hot coins against the frozen pane; and this made a lovely peephole, so round, so round! and behind it peeped a pretty, mild eye, one from each window; and it was the little boy and the little girl. His name was Kay and the little girl's was Gerda.

In the summer they could get over to each other with one jump, but in the winter they had to go down the many stairs and up the many stairs while the snow was drifting outside.

"Those are the white bees swarming," said the old grandmother.

"Do they have a queen bee, too?" asked the little boy, for he knew that there is one among the real bees.

"Yes, they have one," said the grandmother. "She always flies where they swarm thickest. She is the largest of them all, and she never stays quietly on the earth, she flies back again to the black sky. Many a winter night she flies through the streets of the town, and looks in at the windows, and then they freeze in such a queer way, and look like flowers."

"Yes, I've seen that!" said both the children; and now they knew that it was true.

"Can the Snow Queen come in here?" asked the little girl.

"Just let her try," said the boy; "I'll put her on the warm stove, and then she'll melt."

But the grandmother smoothed his hair, and told some other stories.

In the evening, when little Kay was at home and half undressed, he climbed up on the chair by the window, and peeped through the little hole. A few flakes of snow were falling outside, and one of them, the largest of them all, stayed on the edge of one of the flower boxes. The snowflakes grew larger and larger, and at last it turned into a whole woman clothed in the finest white gauze, made out of millions of starlike snowflakes. She was beautiful and delicate, but of ice—of dazzling, glittering ice. Still she was alive; her eyes looked like two clear stars, but there was no peace or rest in them. She nodded toward the window, and beckoned with her hand. The little boy was frightened and jumped down from the chair; then it seemed as if a large bird flew by outside, past the window.

Next day there was a clear frost, then there was a thaw, and then the spring came; the sun shone, the green peeped out, the swallows built nests, the windows were opened, and the little children sat again in their garden high up in the gutter, over all the floors.

The roses had never bloomed so wonderfully as that summer. The little girl had learned a hymn, and there was something in that about roses, and, in speaking of roses, she thought of her own; and she sang it to the little boy, and he sang, too:

> The roses in the valley grow,
> Where we the infant Christ shall know.

And the children held each other by the hand, kissed the roses, looked at God's bright sunshine, and spoke to it, as if the Christ-child were there. What beau-

tiful summer days those were, and how lovely it was to be outside, among the fresh rosebushes, which seemed as if they would never stop blooming.

Kay and Gerda were sitting and looking at the picture book with animals and birds. Then it was—the clock was just striking five on the church tower—that Kay said:

"Ouch! there was a sting in my heart! And now I got something in my eye!"

The little girl put her arm around his neck; he blinked his eyes. No, there was nothing at all to be seen.

"I think it is gone," he said; but it was not gone. It was just one of those grains of glass which sprang from the mirror—the troll mirror that we remember well, the nasty glass that made everything great and good which was mirrored in it seem small and mean, but in which the mean and the wicked things were brought out in relief, and every fault was noticeable at once. Poor little Kay had also got a splinter right in his heart, and it would now soon become like a lump of ice. It didn't hurt him now, but it was there.

"What are you crying for?" he asked. "You look ugly like that. There's nothing the matter with me. Oh, look!" he suddenly shouted, "that rose is worm-eaten, and this one is all crooked. After all, they're disgusting roses. They're like the box they stand in."

And then he kicked the box hard with his foot, and tore both the roses off.

"Kay, what are you doing?" cried the little girl.

And when he saw she was scared he tore off another rose, and then ran in at his own window, away from darling little Gerda.

When she afterward came with her picture book, he said it was only fit for babies; and when the grandmother told stories he always came in with a *but;* and when he could manage it, he would get behind her, put

on a pair of spectacles, and talk just as she did; it was just like her and the people laughed at him. Soon he could imitate the way everybody in the street talked and walked. Everything that was peculiar or ugly about them Kay could imitate; and then people said, "That boy must certainly have a remarkable head." But it was that glass he had got in his eye, the glass that stuck in his heart, that made him tease even little Gerda, who loved him with all her heart.

His games were now quite different from what they were before; they were very sensible. One winter day when it snowed he came out with a big magnifying glass, held up a corner of his blue coat, and let the snowflakes fall on it.

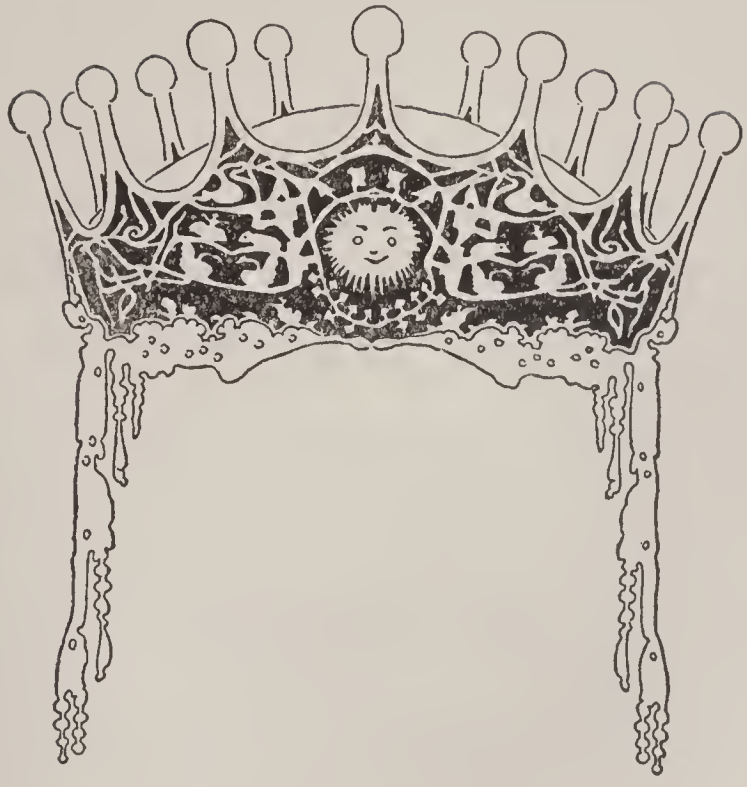
"Now, look at the glass, Gerda," he said.

And every flake of snow was much larger, and looked like a splendid flower, or a star with ten points; it was beautiful to look at.

"See how clever that is," said Kay. "That's much more interesting than real flowers; and there is not a single fault in them—they're quite regular until they begin to melt."

Soon after Kay came in thick gloves, and with his sledge on his back. He shouted right into Gerda's ear, "They said I could go to the big square, where the other boys play," and away he went.

Over on the square the boldest among the boys often tied their sledges to the country people's carts, and then they rode with them a good way. It was fine! When they were in the midst of their playing a big sledge came. It was painted all white, and in it sat somebody wrapped in a woolly white fur, and with a woolly white cap. The sledge drove twice around the square, and Kay quickly got his little sledge tied to it, and so he drove on with it. It went faster and faster, straight into the next street. The one who was driving turned around and nodded in a friendly way to



Kay; it was as if they knew each other: each time when Kay wanted to untie his little sledge, the stranger nodded again, and then Kay stayed where he was, and they drove right out through the town gate. Then the snow began to fall so fast that the boy couldn't see his own hand while he rushed along; then he quickly let go the rope to get loose from the big sledge, but that didn't help, his little sledge was tied tight to the other, and they went like the wind. Then he shouted very loudly, but nobody heard him; and the snow whirled and the sledge flew along; every now and then it gave a jump, and they seemed to be flying over hedges and ditches. He was very frightened. He wanted to say his prayers, but he could only remember the multiplication table.

The snowflakes got larger and larger; at last they looked like big white hens. All at once they jumped aside, the big sledge stopped, and the person who had driven it rose up. The fur and the cap were made all

of snow; it was a lady, tall and straight and dazzlingly white; it was the Snow Queen.

"We came a good, long way," she said. "But what are you cold for? Crawl into my bearskin."

And she seated him beside her in her own sledge, and wrapped the fur around him, and he felt as if he were sinking into a snowdrift.

"Are you still cold?" she asked, and then she kissed him on the forehead.

Oh, it was colder than ice; it went right to his heart, and half of that was already a lump of ice: he felt as if he were going to die; but only for a moment; then it helped him and he didn't notice the cold around him.

"My sledge! don't forget my sledge!" That was the first thing he thought of; and it was tied to one of the white hens, and it flew behind him with the sledge on its back. The Snow Queen kissed Kay again, and then he forgot little Gerda, his grandmother, and all at home.

"Now you won't get any more kisses," said she, "for if you did I should kiss you to death."

Kay looked at her. She was so beautiful, he couldn't imagine a wiser or more lovely face; now she didn't seem to be made of ice as she did when she sat at the window and beckoned to him. In his eyes she was perfect; he didn't feel scared at all. He told her that he could do mental arithmetic even with fractions, that he knew how many square miles in a country and how many inhabitants. And she always smiled, and then it seemed to him that what he knew was not enough, and he looked up into the big, big dome of the air and she flew with him, flew high up on the black clouds, and the storm was whistling and roaring, it was like the singing of ancient ballads. They flew over forests and lakes, over land and sea, below them the cold wind went whistling, the wolves howled, the

snow sparkled, over it flew the black, screaming crows; but above the moon was shining, large and clear, and Kay looked at it the long, long winter night; in the daytime he slept at the feet of the Snow Queen.

THIRD STORY—

THE FLOWER GARDEN OF THE WOMAN WHO COULD CONJURE

BUT how did little Gerda get along when Kay didn't come any more? Where could he be? No one knew, no one could tell her. The boys could only tell that they had seen him tie his sledge to a fine, large one, which had driven along the street and out at the town gate. Nobody knew what had become of him; many tears flowed, and little Gerda wept long and bitterly; then they said he was dead—he had been drowned in the river that ran close by their town. Oh, those were very long dark winter days! But now spring came, with warmer sunshine.

"Kay is dead and gone," said little Gerda.

"I don't believe it," said the Sunshine.

"He is dead and gone," she said to the Swallows.

"We don't believe it," they answered; and at last little Gerda did not believe it herself.

"I will put on my new red shoes," she said one morning, "the ones that Kay never has seen; and then I will go down to the river, and ask it about him."

It was still very early; she kissed the old grandmother, who was still asleep, put on her red shoes, and went all alone out of the town gate toward the river.

"Is it true that you have taken my little playmate? I will give you my red shoes if you will give him back to me!"

And it seemed to her as if the waves nodded quite strangely; and then she took her red shoes, that she liked best of anything she had, and threw them both into the river; but they fell close to the shore, and the little wavelets carried them back to her, to the land. It seemed as if the river would not take from her the dearest things she owned, since, of course, it hadn't taken little Kay; but she thought she hadn't thrown the shoes far enough out; so she climbed into a boat that lay among the reeds; she went to the other end of the boat, and threw the shoes out; but the boat was not bound fast, and at the movement she made it glided away from the shore. She noticed it, and hurried to get back, but before she reached the other end the boat was a yard from the bank, and now it drifted faster away.

Then little Gerda was very much frightened, and began to cry; but no one heard her except the Sparrows, and they couldn't carry her ashore; but they flew along the edge and sang, as if to cheer her up, "Here are we!" here are we!" The boat drifted along with the current, and little Gerda sat quite still, with only her stockings on her feet; her little red shoes floated along behind her, but they couldn't catch up with the boat which went much faster.

It was very pretty on both shores,—lovely flowers,

old trees, and slopes with sheep and cows; but not a human being in sight.

"Perhaps the river will carry me to little Kay," thought Gerda, and then she became more cheerful, and stood up, and for many hours she watched the beautiful green banks; then she came to a big cherry orchard, in which stood a little house with queer red and blue windows; it had a thatched roof, and outside stood two wooden soldiers, who presented arms to those who sailed past.

Gerda called to them, for she thought they were alive, but of course they didn't answer. She came quite close to them; the river carried the boat toward the shore.

Gerda called still louder, and then out of the house came an old, old woman leaning on a hooked stick; she had on a large sunbonnet, painted over with the loveliest flowers.

"You poor little child!" said the old woman, "how did you ever come out on the big fast river and float so far out into the wide world?"

And then the old woman stepped right into the water, hooked the boat with her stick, drew it to land, and lifted little Gerda out. And Gerda was glad to be on dry land again, though she felt a little afraid of the strange old woman.

"Come and tell me who you are, and how you came here," she said. And Gerda told her everything; and the old woman shook her head, and said, "Hem! hem!" And when Gerda had told everything, and asked if she had not seen little Kay, the woman said that he had not yet come by, but that he probably would soon come. Gerda mustn't be sad, but must taste her cherries and look at her flowers, they were prettier than any picture book, for each one of them could tell a story. Then she took Gerda by the hand and they went into the little house, and the old woman locked the door.

The windows were up very high, and the panes were red, blue, and yellow; the daylight shone so strangely in there in all colors. On the table stood the finest cherries, and Gerda ate as many of them as she liked, for she wasn't afraid of that. While she was eating them, the old lady combed her hair with a golden comb, and her hair curled and shone so nice and yellow around the friendly little face that was so round and looked like a rose.

"I've been wanting such a sweet little girl for a long time," said the old woman. "Now you shall see how well we two are going to get along."

And while she was combing her hair, Gerda forgot her adopted brother Kay more and more; for this old woman knew something about witchcraft, but she wasn't a wicked witch. She only witched a little for her own amusement, and now she wanted to keep little Gerda. Therefore she went into the garden, stretched out her stick toward all the rosebushes, and no matter how beautifully they were blooming they all sank into the earth, and no one could tell where they had stood. The old woman was afraid that if the little girl saw roses, she would think of her own, and remember little Kay, and run away.

Now she took Gerda out into the flower garden. What a fragrance and what loveliness! Every conceivable flower was there in full bloom; there were some for every season; no picture book could be gayer and prettier. Gerda jumped high for joy, and played till the sun went down behind the high cherry trees; then she was put into a lovely bed with red silk pillows stuffed with blue violets, and she slept there, and dreamed as wonderfully as any queen on her wedding day.

The next day she played again with the flowers in the warm sunshine; and in this way many days went by. Gerda knew every flower; but, as many as there

were of them, it still seemed to her that one was missing, but which one she didn't know. Then one day she happened to be sitting and looking at the old woman's sunbonnet with the painted flowers and the prettiest one there was a rose. The old woman had forgotten to get that one off the hat when she put the others down in the earth. But that's how it is when you don't stop to think!

"What, aren't there any roses here?" said Gerda.

And she jumped in among the flower beds, and searched and searched, but there was not one to be found. Then she sat down and cried; her hot tears fell just on a spot where a rosebush lay buried, and when the warm tears moistened the earth the bush at once grew up as blooming as when it had sunk; and Gerda hugged it, and kissed the roses, and thought of the beautiful roses at home, and with them of little Kay.

"Oh, I've been made so late!" said the little girl. "I was looking for Kay! Don't you know where he is?" she asked the Roses. "Do you think he is dead and gone?"

"He is not dead," the Roses answered. "We have been in the ground. All the dead people are there, but Kay is not there."

"Thank you," said little Gerda; and she went over to the other flowers, looked into their cups, and asked, "Don't you know where little Kay is?"

But every flower stood in the sun thinking only of its own story or fairy tale; Gerda heard many, many of them; but not one knew anything of Kay.

And what did the Tiger Lily say?

"Do you hear the drum 'Tom-tom?' There are only two notes, always 'tom-tom!' Hear the mourning song of the women, hear the call of the priests. The Hindoo widow stands in her long red mantle on the funeral pile; the flames rise up around her and her dead hus-

band; but the Hindoo woman is thinking of the living one here in the circle, of him whose eyes burn hotter than flames, whose fiery glances reach her heart more than the flames, which are soon to burn her body to ashes. Can the flame of the heart die in the flame of the funeral pile?"

"I don't understand that at all!" said little Gerda.

"That's my story," said the Lily.

What does the Convolvulus say?

"Above the narrow rock road towers an old baronial castle, the ivy grows thickly over the old red walls, leaf by leaf around the balcony and there stands a beautiful girl; she bends over the balustrade and looks down at the road. No rose is fresher on its stem than she; no apple blossom borne by the wind from its tree floats more lightly along. How her costly silks rustle! 'Is he never coming?' "

"Do you mean Kay?" asked little Gerda.

"I'm only speaking of my own story—my dream," replied the Convolvulus.

What does the little Snowdrop say?

"Between the trees ropes hold a long board; that is a swing. Two pretty little girls, in dresses white as snow and long green silk ribbons flying from their hats, are sitting on it, swinging; their brother, who is bigger than they, stands in the swing, and he has put his arm around the rope to hold himself, for in one hand he has a little saucer, and in the other a clay pipe; he is blowing bubbles. The swing flies, and the bubbles rise with beautiful changing colors; the last still hangs from the pipe bowl, swaying in the wind. The swing flies on: the little black dog, light as the bubbles, stands up on his hind legs and wants to be taken into the swing; it flies on, and the dog falls, barks, and is angry; they fooled it, and the bubble bursts. A swinging board and a bursting foam picture —that is my song."

"It may be very pretty, what you're telling, but you're so sad about it, and you don't mention little Kay at all."

What do the Hyacinths say?

"There were three beautiful sisters, so clear and delicate. The dress of one was red, that of the second blue, and that of the third all white; hand in hand they danced by the calm lake in the bright moonlight. They were not elves, they were daughters of men. The scents were so sweet and the girls were lost in the forest; the scents grew stronger, three coffins, with the three beautiful maidens lying in them, glided from the wood thicket across the lake; the glowworms flew gleaming about them like little hovering lights. Are the dancing girls sleeping, or are they dead? The flower scent says they are corpses and the evening bell tolls over the dead."

"You make me very sad," said little Gerda. "Your scent is so strong, I can't help thinking of the dead girls. Ah! is little Kay really dead? The roses have been down in the earth, and they say no."

"Ding! Dong!" rang the Hyacinth bells. "We are not tolling for little Kay—we don't know him; we only sing our song, the only one we know."

And Gerda went to the Buttercup, that was shining among its glistening green leaves.

"You are a little bright sun," said Gerda. "Tell me, if you know, where I can find my play brother."

And the Buttercup shone so gaily, and looked back at Gerda. What song might the Buttercup sing? That wasn't about Kay either.

"In a little yard the clear sun shone warm on the first day of spring. The sunbeams glided down the white wall of the neighboring house; close by grew the first yellow flowers, glittering gold in the warm sun's rays. The old grandmother sat out of doors in her chair; her granddaughter, the poor, pretty ser-

vant, was coming home for a short visit; she kissed her grandmother. There was gold, heart's gold, in that blessed kiss, gold in the mouth, gold in the eyes, gold up there in the bright sunrise. Well, that's my little story," said the Buttercup.

"My poor old grandmother!" sighed Gerda. "She must be lonesome for me and sad about me, just as she was about little Kay. But I shall soon go home and bring Kay with me. There is no use in my asking the flowers, they only know their own song, they can't tell me anything." And then she pinned her little dress so that she could run faster; but the Jonquil struck against her leg as she sprang over it, and she stopped to look at the tall yellow flower, and asked, "Perhaps you know something?"

And she bent right down to the flower, and what did it say?

"I can see myself! I can see myself!" said the Jonquil. "Oh! oh! what a smell I have! Up in the little room in the gable stands a little half-dressed dancing girl; she stands sometimes on one leg, sometimes on two; she kicks at the whole world; she's nothing but a snare for the eyes; she pours water out of a teapot on a bit of stuff—it is her bodice. Cleanliness is a good thing! Her white frock hangs on a hook; it has been washed in the teapot too, and dried on the roof; she puts it on and ties her saffron handkerchief around her neck, and the dress looks all the whiter. Kick high! Look how she struts on one stem! I can see myself! I can see myself!"

"I don't care at all about that," said Gerda. "That's nothing to tell me!"

And then she ran to the end of the garden. The door was locked, but she pulled at the rusty catch until it got loose and the door sprang open, and little Gerda ran in her bare feet out into the wide world. She looked back three times, but no one came after her; at

last she could run no longer, and sat down on a big stone, and when she looked around the summer was over—it was late in autumn; nobody could know that in the beautiful garden, where there was always sunshine, and the flowers of every season always bloomed.

"Oh, dear, how late I am!" said little Gerda. "It's already autumn, so I mustn't rest again!"

And she got up to go on. Oh! how sore and tired her little feet were. All around it looked cold and bleak; the long willow leaves were quite yellow, and the mist dropped from them like water; one leaf after another dropped; only the sloe thorn still bore fruit, but it was so sour and puckered the mouth all up. Oh! how gray and gloomy it was in the wide world!

FOURTH STORY—
THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS

GERDA had to rest again; then a big Crow came hopping across the snow, just opposite from the spot where she was sitting. This Crow had long been sitting and looking at her, and waggling its head —now it said, "Caw, caw, how do, how do!" It couldn't say it any better, but it felt very friendly toward the little girl, and asked where she was going all alone in the wide world. The word "alone" Gerda understood very well, and felt how much it meant; and she told the Crow the whole story of her life, and asked if it hadn't seen Kay.

And the Crow nodded very thoughtfully and said:

"It might be! It might be!"

"What, do you think so?" cried the little girl, and nearly squeezed the Crow to death, she kissed it so.

"Gently, gently!" said the Crow. "I think I know; I think it might be little Kay, but he has probably forgotten you, with the Princess."

"Does he live with a Princess?" asked Gerda.

"Yes; listen," said the Crow. "But it's so hard for me to speak your language. If you know the crow language, I can talk much better."

"No, I never learned it," said Gerda; "but my grandmother understood it, and could speak the P-language too. I only wish I had learned it."

"That doesn't matter," said the Crow. "I shall tell you as well as I can, and that won't be very well."

And then the Crow told what it knew.

"In the kingdom where we're sitting now, lives a Princess who is marvelously clever, but then she has read all the newspapers in the world, and has forgotten them again, she is so clever. The other day she was sitting on the throne—and they say that isn't so much fun, either—and then she happened to hum a song, and it was just this, 'Why shouldn't I get married?' 'Well, there's something in that,' she said, and so she wanted to marry, but she wanted a husband who could answer when he was spoken to, not one who only stood and looked haughty, for that is so tiresome. And so she had all her maids of honor drummed together, and when they heard what she wanted they were very glad. 'I like that,' they said. 'That's what I was thinking myself only the other day.' You may be sure that every word I am telling you is true," said the Crow. "I have a tame sweetheart who goes around freely in the castle, and she told me everything."

Of course the sweetheart was a crow, for birds of a feather flock together and a crow always finds a crow.

"The newspapers were published at once, with a border of hearts and the Princess's initials. One could read in them that every young man who was good looking might come to the castle and speak with the Princess, and he who spoke as if he belonged there, and who spoke best, the Princess would choose for her husband. Yes, indeed," the Crow said, "you can believe me. It's as true as I sit here. People came

flocking in; there was a pushing and running to and fro, but nobody had any luck the first or second day. They could all talk well enough when they were out in the street, but when they entered at the palace gates, and saw the guards in silver and went up the staircase and saw the lackeys in gold, and the big lighted halls, they were staggered. And when they stood before the throne, on which the Princess sat, they could say nothing except the last word she had said, and she didn't want to hear that again. It was just as if the people in there had swallowed snuff and had fallen into a trance, till they got into the street again, and then they could talk fast enough. There was a whole row of them, from the town gate to the palace gate. I went in myself to see it," said the Crow. "They got both hungry and thirsty, but in the palace they didn't get as much as a glass of lukewarm water. A few of the wisest had brought bread and butter with them, but they wouldn't share it with their neighbor, for they thought 'Let him look hungry, and the Princess won't have him.' "

"But Kay, little Kay?" asked Gerda. "When did he come? Was he among the crowd?"

"Wait, wait! We're just coming to him. On the third day a small person, without horse or carriage, came marching cheerfully right up to the castle; his eyes sparkled like yours, he had fine long hair, but his clothes were shabby."

"That was Kay!" cried Gerda rejoicingly. "Oh, then I have found him!" And she clapped her hands.

"He had a little knapsack on his back," said the Crow.

"No, that must have been his sledge," said Gerda, "for he went away with a sledge."

"That may well be," said the Crow, "for I did not look very closely. But this much I know from my tame sweetheart, that when he came in the palace gate and

saw the Life Guards in silver, and went up the staircase and saw the lackeys in gold, he wasn't the least little bit put out. He nodded, and said to them, 'It must be tedious to stand on the stairs—I'd rather go inside.' Inside the rooms were bright with candles; privy councillors and Excellencies went barefooted and carried gold dishes; anybody might have been impressed! His boots creaked perfectly terribly, and still he wasn't scared."

"I'm sure it's Kay," said Gerda, "I know he had new boots on; I've heard them creak in grandmother's room."

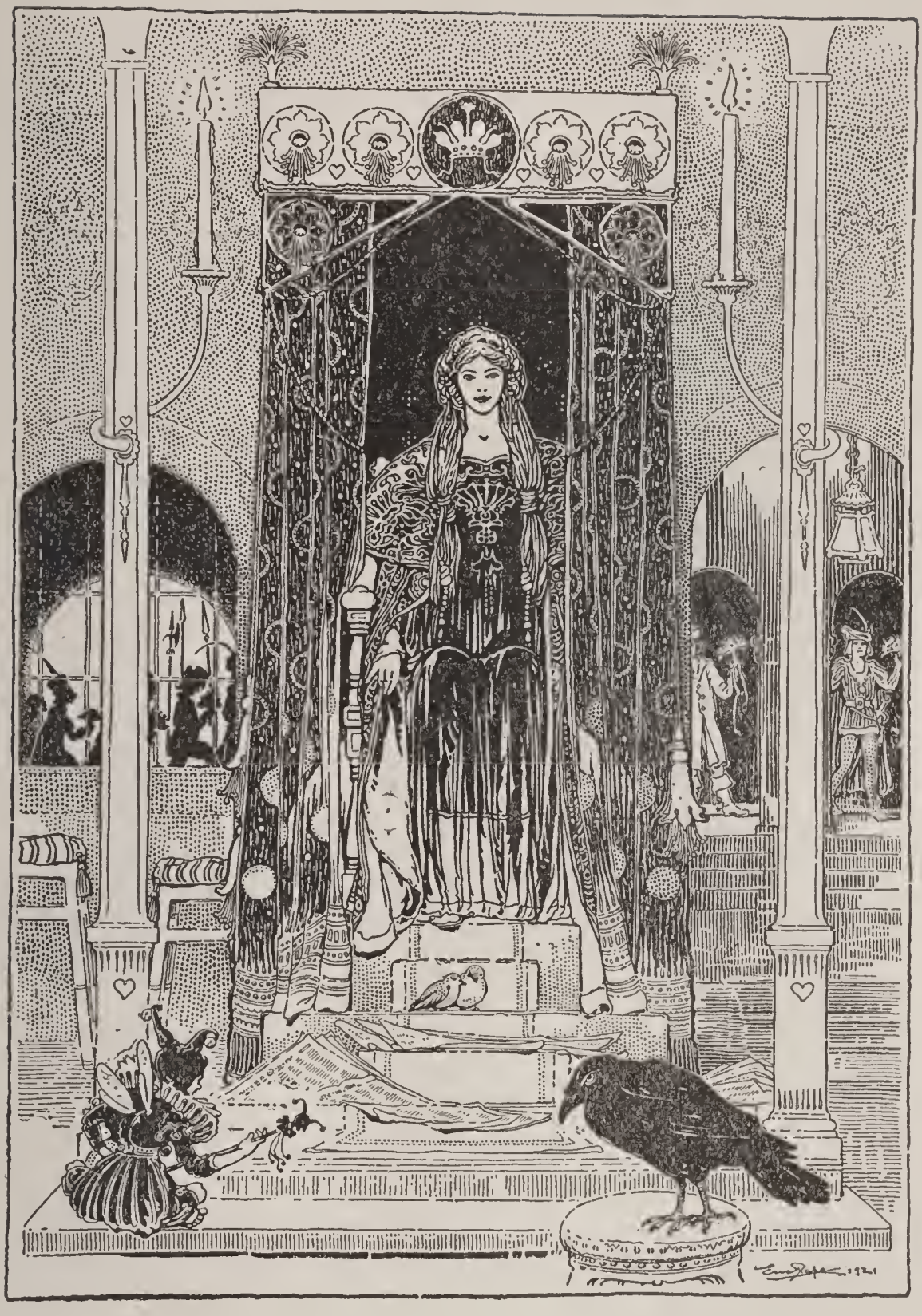
"Yes, they certainly creaked," said the Crow. "And he went boldly in to the Princess herself, who sat on a pearl that was as big as a spinning wheel; and all the court ladies with their maids and their maids' maids, and all the cavaliers with their valets and their valets' valets who keep a boy, were standing around; and the nearer they stood to the door, the prouder they looked. You can hardly look at the valets' valet's boy, who always wears slippers, he stands so haughtily in the doorway!"

"It must be awful!" said little Gerda. "And Kay got the Princess anyway?"

"If I hadn't been a crow, I would have married her myself, although I'm engaged. They say he spoke as well as I can when I speak the crow language; I heard that from my tame sweetheart. He was cheerful and agreeable; he had not come to woo, but only to hear the wisdom of the Princess; and he liked it, and then she liked him."

"Yes, that was certainly Kay!" said Gerda. "He was so clever, he could do mental arithmetic up to fractions. Oh! won't you lead me to the castle too?"

"That's easily said," said the Crow. "But how are we to manage it? I'll talk it over with my tame sweet-



heart; she can probably advise us; because I must tell you that a little girl like you will never be let in in the regular way."

"Oh, yes, I will!" said Gerda. "When Kay hears that I'm there he'll come out right away, and bring me in."

"Wait for me at the stile over there," said the Crow; and it wagged its head and flew away.

It was already late in the evening when the Crow came back.

"Caw, caw!" it said. "She wants to be remembered to you many times! And here's a little loaf for you. She took it from the kitchen. There's plenty of bread there, and you must be hungry. You can't possibly get into the palace, your feet are bare, you know, and the guards in silver and the lackeys in gold would not allow it. But don't cry; you'll get there anyway. My sweetheart knows a little back staircase that leads up to the bedroom, and she knows where she can get the key."

And they went into the garden, into the great avenue, where one leaf was falling after another; and when the lights were put out in the palace one after the other, the Crow led Gerda to a back door, which stood ajar.

Oh, how Gerda's heart beat with fear and longing! It was just as if she had been going to do something wicked; and yet she only wanted to know if it was little Kay. Yes, it must be he. His thoughtful eyes and his long hair were so clear in her memory, she could almost see him smile as he had smiled at home when they sat among the roses. He would certainly be glad to see her; to hear what a long distance she had come for his sake; to know how sorry they had all been at home when he did not come back. Oh, what fear and joy she felt!

Now they were on the staircase. A little lamp was burning on a cupboard, and in the middle of the floor stood the tame Crow turning her head in every direction

and looking at Gerda, who curtsied as her grandmother had taught her to do.

"My betrothed has spoken to me very favorably of you, my little lady," said the tame Crow. "Your *Vita*, as they call it, is very moving. Will you take the lamp? then I will precede you. We will go straight up, in that way we shan't meet anybody."

"I feel as if some one were coming after us," said Gerda, and something rushed by her; it seemed like shadows on the wall; horses with flying manes and thin legs, hunters, and ladies and gentlemen on horseback.

"These are only dreams," said the Crow, "they are coming to take the thoughts of our noble masters out hunting. That's all the better, because then you can look at them more closely in their beds. But I hope that when you come to honor and dignity, you will have a grateful heart."

"I wouldn't talk about that," said the Crow from the wood.

Now they came into the first large room: it was hung with rose-colored satin, and artificial flowers were worked on the walls; and here the dreams already came flitting by them, but they moved so quickly that Gerda could not see the high-born lords and ladies. Each room was more splendid than the last; one might well be taken aback! Now they were in the bedroom. Here the ceiling was like a large palm tree with leaves of glass, of costly glass, and in the middle of the floor two beds hungs on a thick stalk of gold, and each of them looked like a lily. One of them was white, and in that lay the Princess; the other was red, and in that Gerda was going to look for little Kay. She bent one of the red leaves aside, and then she saw a brown neck. Oh, that was Kay! She called out his name quite loud, and held the lamp toward him. The dreams rushed into the room again on horseback—he woke up, turned his head, and—it was not little Kay!

Only the Prince's neck was like him; but he was young and good looking, and the Princess peered out from the white lily, and asked who was there. Then little Gerda wept, and told her whole history, and all that the Crows had done for her.

"You poor child!" said the Prince and Princess.

And they praised the Crows, and said that they were not angry with them at all, but the Crows were not to do it again. However, they should be rewarded.

"Do you want to be free?" asked the Princess, "or will you have fixed appointments as court crows, with all the kitchen left-overs?"

And the two Crows bowed, and begged for fixed appointments, for they thought of their old age, and said, "It is a good thing to have something for the old man," for that was the way they put it.

And the Prince got up out of his bed, and let Gerda sleep in it, and he couldn't do more than that. She folded her little hands, and thought, "How good men and animals are!" and then she shut her eyes and went quietly to sleep. All the dreams came flying in again, looking like angels, and they drew a little sledge, on which Kay sat nodding; but all this was only a dream, and therefore it was gone again as soon as she woke up.

The next day she was dressed up from head to foot in silk and velvet; and she was asked to stay in the castle and have a good time; but she only wanted a little carriage, with a horse to draw it, and a pair of little boots; then she would drive out again into the wide world and find Kay.

And she not only got boots but a muff; she was dressed so prettily; and when she was ready to go a coach made of pure gold stopped before her door. Upon it shone like a star the coat of arms of the Prince and Princess; coachman, footmen, and outriders—for there were outriders, too—sat on horseback with gold crowns on their heads. The Prince and Princess themselves helped her

into the carriage, and wished her all good fortune. The forest Crow, who was now married, went with her the first three miles; he sat by Gerda's side, for he could not stand riding backward: the other Crow stood in the doorway flapping her wings; she didn't come with them, for since she had had a fixed appointment and too much to eat, she suffered from headache. Inside the coach was lined with sugar biscuits, and in the seat there were gingerbread nuts and fruit.

"Good-by, good-by!" cried the Prince and Princess; and little Gerda wept, and the Crow wept. So they went on for the first three miles; and then the Crow said good-by, and that was the saddest parting of all. The Crow flew up on a tree, and beat his black wings as long as he could see the coach, which shone like the bright sunshine.

FIFTH STORY—
THE LITTLE ROBBER GIRL

THEY drove through the dark forest, but the coach gleamed like a torch, dazzling the eyes of the robbers, so that they couldn't bear it.

"That is gold! that is gold!" they shouted, and rushed forward, and seized the horses, killed the postilions, the coachman, and the footmen, and then pulled little Gerda out of the carriage.

"She is fat—she is pretty—she has been fattened with nut kernels!" said the old robber woman, who had a long stiff beard, and eyebrows that hung down over her eyes. "She's as good as a little pet lamb; my, how good she'll taste!"

And she drew out her shining knife, that gleamed in a horrible way.

"Ouch!" screamed the old woman at the same moment; for her own daughter who hung at her back bit her in the ear; she was a wonder, she was so wild and rough.

"You nasty brat!" screamed the old woman; and she didn't have time to butcher Gerda.

"I want her to play with me!" said the little robber girl. "She shall give me her muff and her pretty dress, and sleep with me in my bed!"

And then she bit her mother again so that the robber woman jumped high in the air and turned right around, and all the robbers laughed and said:

"Watch her, she's dancing with her brat!"

"I want to get into the carriage," said the little robber girl.

And she must and would have her own way because she was so spoiled and so stubborn; and she and Gerda sat in the carriage, and drove over stock and stone deep into the forest. The little robber girl was as big as Gerda, but stronger and more broad-shouldered; and she had a brown skin; her eyes were quite black, and they looked almost mournful. She put her arms around little Gerda, and said:

"They shan't kill you as long as I am not angry with you. I suppose you are a Princess?"

"No," said little Gerda. And she told everything that had happened to her, and how fond she was of little Kay.

The robber girl looked at her seriously, nodded slightly, and said:

"They shan't kill you even if I do get angry with you, for then I will do it myself."

And then she dried Gerda's eyes, and put her two hands into the beautiful muff that was so soft and warm.

Now the coach stopped, and they were in the courtyard of a robber castle. It was cracked from top to bottom; ravens and crows flew out of the open holes, and big bulldogs—each of whom looked as if he could swallow a man—jumped high up, but they didn't bark, for that was forbidden.

In the large old smoky hall a bright fire burned on the stone floor; the smoke drifted along under the ceiling

1921

and tried to find a way out. A big cauldron of soup was boiling and hares and rabbits were roasting on the spit.

"You shall sleep to-night with me and all my little animals," said the robber girl.

They got something to eat and drink, and then went to a corner, where straw and rugs were spread out. Above these sat on laths and perches more than a hundred pigeons, that all seemed asleep, but they turned a little when the two little girls came.

"They all belong to me," said the little robber girl; and she quickly seized one of the nearest, held it by the legs, and shook it so that it flapped its wings. "Kiss it!" she cried, and beat it in Gerda's face. "Here are my wood rascals," she kept on, pointing to a number of laths that had been nailed in front of a hole in the wall. "Those are wood rascals, those two; they fly away at once if one doesn't keep them well locked up. And here's my old sweetheart 'Ba.'" And she pulled out by the horn a Reindeer, that was tied up, and had a polished copper ring around its neck. "We have to keep him tight too, or he'd run away from us. Every evening I tickle his neck with a sharp knife, and he's very frightened at that."

And the little girl pulled a long knife from a cleft in the wall, and let it glide over the Reindeer's neck; the poor creature kicked out its legs, and the little robber girl laughed, and pulled Gerda into bed with her.

"Do you want to take the knife to bed with you?" asked Gerda, and looked at it in rather a frightened way.

"I always sleep with a knife," said the robber girl. "You never can tell what's going to happen. But now tell me again what you told me just now about little Kay, and why you went out into the wide world."

And Gerda told it again from the beginning; and the Wood Pigeons cooed above them in their cage, and the other pigeons slept. The little robber girl put her arm

around Gerda's neck, held her knife in the other hand, and slept so that one could hear her; but Gerda couldn't close her eyes at all—she didn't know whether she was going to live or die. The robbers sat around the fire, singing and drinking, and the old robber woman turned somersaults. It was an awful sight for the little girl.

Then the Wood Pigeons said, "Coo, coo! we have seen little Kay. A white hen was carrying his sledge; he sat in the Snow Queen's carriage, which drove low over the forest as we lay in our nests. She blew upon us young pigeons, and all died except us two. Coo! coo!"

"What are you saying up there?" asked Gerda. "Where was the Snow Queen traveling? Do you know anything about it?"

"She was probably traveling to Lapland, for there they always have ice and snow. Ask the Reindeer who is tied up with the cord."

"There is ice and snow there, and it is a lovely place," said the Reindeer. "There you run free in great, glittering valleys! There the Snow Queen has her summer tent; but her strong castle is up toward the North Pole, on the island that's called Spitzbergen."

"Oh, Kay, little Kay!" sighed Gerda.

"Now you'll be quiet," said the robber girl, "or you'll get my knife in your stomach."

In the morning Gerda told her all that the Wood Pigeons had said, and the robber girl looked quite serious, and nodded her head and said:

"It doesn't matter! it doesn't matter!"

"Do you know where Lapland is?" she asked the Reindeer.

"Who should know better than I?" the animal said, and its eyes sparkled in its head. "I was born and bred there; I played in the snow fields there."

"Listen!" said the robber girl to Gerda. "You see

all our men have gone away. Only mother is here still, and she'll stay; but toward noon she drinks out of the big bottle, and then she takes a little nap; then I'll do something for you."

Now she jumped out of bed, rushed over around her mother's neck and pulled her beard, crying:

"Good morning, my own sweet nanny goat." And her mother filliped her nose till it was red and blue; but it was all done for pure love.

When the mother had drunk out of her bottle and was taking a little nap, the robber girl went to the Reindeer, and said:

"I have a queer feeling that I'd like to tickle you a few times more with the knife, for you are very funny then; but it doesn't matter. I'll untie your rope and help you out, so that you can run to Lapland; but you must use your legs well, and carry this little girl to the palace of the Snow Queen, where her playfellow is. You've heard what she told me, for she spoke loud enough, and you are always listening."

The Reindeer jumped high for joy. The robber girl lifted little Gerda on its back, and had the forethought to tie her on, and even to give her a little cushion as a saddle.

"It doesn't matter," she said, "there are your fur boots, it's going to be cold; but the muff I'm going to keep, that's much too pretty! Still, you're not going to be cold, for all that; here's my mother's big mittens, they'll reach right up to your elbows. Now your hands look just like my ugly mother's."

And Gerda wept for joy.

"I can't bear to see you whimper," said the little robber girl. "Now, you just ought to look very happy. And here are two loaves of bread and a ham for you, so you won't be hungry."

These were tied on the Reindeer's back. The little robber girl opened the door, coaxed in all the big dogs,

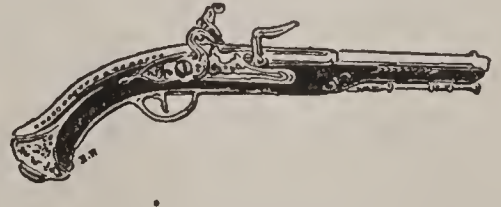
and then cut the rope with her sharp knife, and said to the Reindeer:

"Run now, but take good care of the little girl."

And Gerda stretched out her hands with the big mittens toward the little robber girl, and said, "Good-by;" and the Reindeer ran over stock and stone, away through the great forest, over marshes and steppes, as quick as it could go. The wolves howled and the ravens screamed. "Whizz! whizz!" it said up in the sky; it looked as if it sneezed red.

"Those are my old Northern Lights," said the Reindeer. "Look how they glow!" And then it ran on faster than ever, day and night.

The loaves were eaten, and the ham too, and then they were in Lapland.



SIXTH STORY—
THE LAPP WOMAN AND THE FINN WOMAN

AT a little hut they stopped. It was a pitiful place; the roof sloped down to the ground, and the door was so low that the family had to creep on their stomachs when they wanted to go in or out. Nobody was home except an old Lapp woman, cooking fish on a fish-oil lamp; and the Reindeer told Gerda's whole history, but it told its own first, for this seemed to the Reindeer the more important of the two. Gerda was so overcome with the cold that she could not speak.

"Oh, you poor things," said the Lapp woman, "you've a long way to run yet! You must go more than a hundred miles into the Finmark, for the Snow Queen is there, staying in the country, and burning Roman candles every evening. I'll write a few words on a dried codfish, for I have no paper, and I'll give you that as a letter to the Finn woman; she can give you better information than I."

And when Gerda had been warmed and refreshed with

food and drink, the Lapp woman wrote a few words on a dried codfish, and telling Gerda to take care of it, tied her again on the Reindeer, and the Reindeer galloped away. Whizz! whizz! something said high in the air; the whole night long the most beautiful blue Northern Lights were burning.

And then they got to the Finmark, and knocked at the chimney of the Finn woman, for she didn't even have a door.

In here it was so hot that the woman herself went around almost naked. She was small and muddy looking. She at once loosened little Gerda's dress and took off the mittens and boots; otherwise it would have been too hot for her to bear. Then she laid a piece of ice on the Reindeer's head, and read what was written on the codfish; she read it three times, and then she knew it by heart, and put the fish into the kettle, for it was eatable, and she never wasted anything.

Now the Reindeer told first its own history, and then little Gerda's; and the Finn woman blinked with her clever eyes, but said nothing.

"You are very clever," said the Reindeer, "I know you can tie all the winds of the world together with a bit of thread: if the seaman unties one knot, he has a good wind; if he unties the second, it blows hard; but if he unties the third and the fourth the wind tears the trees in the forest up by their roots. Won't you give the little girl a draught, so that she may get the strength of twelve men and overcome the Snow Queen?"

"The strength of twelve men," said the Finn woman, "that would help a lot!"

And she went to a shelf, and took down a big rolled-up skin and unrolled it; strange letters were written on it, and the Finn woman read until the water streamed down over her forehead.

But the Reindeer again begged so hard for little Gerda, and Gerda looked at the Finn woman with such

beseeching eyes full of tears, that she began to blink again with her own, and drew the Reindeer into a corner, and whispered to it, while she laid fresh ice on its head.

"Little Kay is certainly with the Snow Queen, and finds everything there to his taste and liking, and thinks it the best place in the world; but that is because he has a splinter of glass in his eye, and a little grain of glass in his heart. They must be got out, or he will never be a human being again, and the Snow Queen will keep her power over him."

"But can't you give something to little Gerda, so that she will have power over all this?"

"I can give her no greater power than she has already; don't you see how great that is? Don't you see how men and animals have to serve her, and how well she gets along in the world on her bare feet? We mustn't tell her about her power, it is in her heart; it is in her being a sweet and innocent child. If she can't reach the Snow Queen herself and get the glass out of little Kay, we can be of no use! Two miles from here the Snow Queen's garden begins; you can carry the little girl there; set her down by the big bush that stands with red berries in the snow. And no gossiping but hurry up and get back here!"

And then the Finn woman lifted little Gerda on the Reindeer, which ran as fast as it could.

"Oh, I didn't get my boots! I didn't get my mittens!" cried little Gerda.

She soon noticed that in the cutting cold; but the Reindeer didn't dare to stop; it ran till it came to the big bush with the red berries; there it set Gerda down, and kissed her on the mouth, and big bright tears ran down the creature's cheeks; and then it ran back, as fast as it could. There stood poor Gerda without shoes, without gloves, in the middle of the terrible ice-cold Finmark.

She ran forward as fast as she could; then a whole regiment of snowflakes came; but they didn't fall down from the sky, for that was quite bright and shining with Northern Lights; the snowflakes ran along the ground, and the nearer they came the larger they grew. Gerda still remembered how large and strange they had seemed when she looked at them through the magnifying glass. But here they were certainly much bigger and much more terrible—they were alive. They were the outposts of the Snow Queen, and had the queerest shapes. A few looked like ugly large porcupines; others like whole knots of snakes sticking out their heads; and others like little fat bears, whose hair stood on end; all were brilliantly white, all were living snowflakes.

Then little Gerda said the Lord's Prayer; and the cold was so intense that she could see her own breath, it came out of her mouth like smoke. Her breath got thicker and thicker, and formed itself into bright little angels, who grew and grew whenever they touched the earth; and all had helmets on their heads and shields and spears in their hands; their number increased more and more, and when Gerda had finished her prayer a whole legion stood around her, and struck with their spears at the awful snowflakes, so that these were shattered into a thousand pieces; and little Gerda went forward safe and brave. The angels stroked her hands and feet, and then she felt the cold less, and walked quickly on to the Snow Queen's palace.

But now we must see what Kay is doing. He certainly wasn't thinking of little Gerda, and least of all that she was standing in front of the castle.

SEVENTH STORY—
WHAT HAPPENED IN THE SNOW QUEEN'S CASTLE AND WHAT HAPPENED AFTERWARD

THE walls of the castle were the drifting snow, and the windows and doors were the cutting winds. There were more than a hundred halls, as the snow drifted; the largest stretched for many miles; the strong Northern Lights illumined them all, and they were so big, so empty, so icily cold, and so dazzling. No fun was ever here, not as much as a little bear dance where the wind could have blown a trumpet and the ice bears walked on their hind legs and had elegant manners; never a little card party with slaps on the jaw and give-me-your-paw; never any little coffee gossip among the white-fox ladies. Empty, vast, and cold were the halls of the Snow Queen. The Northern Lights flamed

so punctually that one could figure out when they were going to be highest and lowest. In the middle of this empty, endless snow hall was a frozen lake; it had cracked into a thousand pieces, but each piece was so accurately like the rest, that it was a perfect work of art; and in the middle of the lake sat the Snow Queen when she was at home, and then she said that she sat in the mirror of reason, and that this was the only one, and the best in the world.

Little Kay was quite blue with cold—indeed, almost black, but he didn't notice it, for she had kissed the cold shivers away from him; and his heart was almost like a lump of ice. He dragged a few sharp flat pieces of ice to and fro, joining them together in all kinds of ways, for he wanted to do something with them. It was like our little tablets of wood, which we lay together to form figures—what we call the Chinese puzzle. Kay also was making figures, the cleverest of all; it was the ice game of reason. In his eyes these figures were very remarkable and of the highest importance; that was because of the piece of glass sticking in his eye. He made figures that spelled out a whole written word—but he could never manage to spell out the one word he wanted—the word "Eternity." And the Snow Queen had said:

"If you can puzzle out this figure, you shall be your own master, and I will give you the whole world and a new pair of skates."

But he could not.

"Now I'll fly away to the hot countries," said the Snow Queen. "I will go and look into the black pots." These were the volcanoes, Etna and Vesuvius, as they are called. "I'm going to whiten them a little! That's necessary; that's good after lemons and grapes."

And the Snow Queen flew away, and Kay sat all alone in the large, empty hall that stretched for miles, and looked at his pieces of ice, and thought so hard that he

creaked inside; he sat quite stiff and still, one would have thought that he was frozen to death.

Then it was that little Gerda stepped into the castle through the gate of cutting winds, but she said an evening prayer and the winds lay down as if to sleep; and she stepped into the big, empty, cold halls—then she saw Kay; she knew him, she fell on his neck, hugged him tight, and called out:

"Kay, dear little Kay! at last I have found you!"

But he sat quite still, stiff and cold. Then little Gerda wept hot tears, they fell on his breast; they pressed into his heart, they thawed the lump of ice, and consumed the little piece of glass in it. He looked at her, and she sang the hymn:

> The roses in the valley grow,
> Where we shall once the Christ-child know.

Then Kay burst into tears; he wept so that the splinter of glass rolled out of his eye. Now he recognized her, and cried with joy:

"Gerda, dear little Gerda! where have you been all this time? And where have I been?" And he looked all around him. "How cold it is here! how large and empty!"

And he clung to Gerda, and she laughed and wept for joy. It was so wonderful that even the pieces of ice around them danced for joy; and when they were tired and lay down, they formed themselves just into the letters which the Snow Queen had said he must discover to be his own master, and to get the whole world and a new pair of skates.

And Gerda kissed his cheeks, and they bloomed pink; she kissed his eyes, and they shone like her own; she kissed his hands and feet, and he was well and strong. The Snow Queen might come home now; his letter of liberty stood written there with shining pieces of ice.

And they took one another by the hand, and wan-

dered out of the big castle. They talked about the grandmother, and of the roses on the roof; and where they went the winds rested and the sun broke out; and when they came to the bush with the red berries, the Reindeer was standing there waiting: it had brought another young reindeer, whose udder was full and who gave the children warm milk, and kissed them on the mouth. Then they carried Kay and Gerda, first to the Finn woman, where they warmed themselves in the hot room, and found out how to go home, and then to the Lapp woman, who had made new clothes for them and put her sledge in order.

The Reindeer and the young Reindeer sprang at their side, and followed them as far as the boundary of the country. There the first green peeped out, and there they took leave of the two reindeer and the Lapp woman. "Good-by!" they all said. And the first little birds began to twitter, the woods had green buds, and out of it on a beautiful horse (which Gerda knew, for it was the one that had drawn her golden coach) a young girl came riding, with a shining red cap on her head and a pair of pistols in the holsters. This was the little robber girl, who had grown tired of staying at home, and wished to go first to the north, and if that did not suit her, in some other direction. She knew Gerda at once, and Gerda knew her too; and there was great joy.

"You're a great one to traipse around!" she said to little Kay. "I'd like to know if you're so good that people ought to run to the end of the world for your sake!"

But Gerda patted her cheeks, and asked about the Prince and Princess.

"They've gone to foreign countries," said the robber girl.

"But the Crow?" said Gerda.

"Why, the Crow is dead," answered the other. "The tame one has become a widow, and goes around with an

end of black worsted thread around her leg. She takes on terribly and it's all nonsense. But now tell me what happened to you, and how you caught him."

And Gerda and Kay told their story.

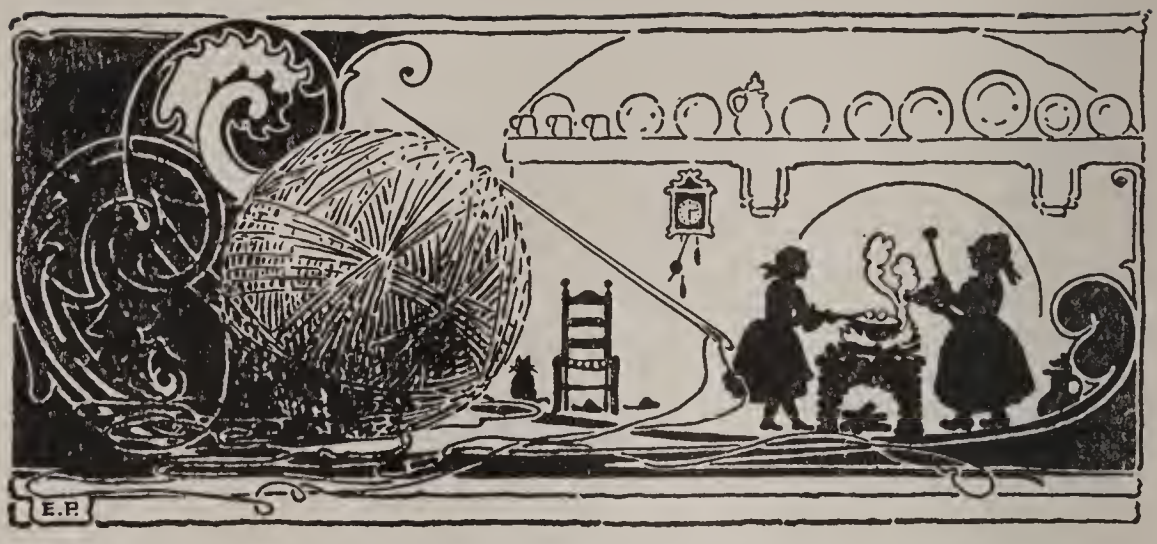
"Snip-snap-snurre-basse-lurre!" said the robber girl.

And she took them both by the hand, and promised that if she ever came through their town, she would come up and pay them a visit. And then she rode away into the wide world. But Gerda and Kay went hand in hand, and as they went it was lovely spring, with green things and flowers. The church bells rang and they knew the high steeples and the great town; it was the one in which they lived; and they went to grandmother's door, and up the stairs, and into the room, where everything stood in the same place. The big clock was going "Tick! tack!" and the hands were turning; but as they went through the door they noticed that they had become grown-up people. The roses out on the roof gutter were blooming into the open windows, and there stood the little children's chairs, and Kay and Gerda sat down on their own, and held each other by the hand. They had forgotten the cold, empty splendor of the Snow Queen like a bad dream. The grandmother was sitting in God's bright sunshine, and read aloud out of the Bible, "Except ye become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of God."

And Kay and Gerda looked into each other's eyes, and all at once they understood the old hymn:

> Roses in the valley grow,
> Where we the Christ-child once shall know.

There they both sat, grown up, and yet children—children in their hearts—and it was summer, warm, delightful summer.



The Darning Needle

THERE was once a Darning Needle, who thought she was so fine that she was really a sewing needle.

"Look at what you're holding now!" she said to the Fingers which took her out. "Don't drop me! If I fall on the floor you may never find me again, I am so fine!"

"Oh, it isn't as bad as that," said the Fingers; and they grasped her around the waist.

"Look, I come with retinue!" said the Darning Needle, and she drew a long thread after her, but there was no knot in the thread.

The Fingers pointed the needle right at the cook's slipper, in which the upper leather had cracked, and now it was going to be sewn together.

"That's low work," said the Darning Needle. "I shall never get through. I'm breaking! I'm breaking!" And then she broke. "Didn't I tell you?" said the Darning Needle, "I'm too fine!"

"Now, she's no good," thought the Fingers; but they had to hold her fast, all the same; for the cook dropped some sealing wax on the needle, and pinned her kerchief together with it in front.

"Well, now I'm a breastpin!" said the Darning Needle. "I knew very well that I should come to honor: when one is something, one always comes to something!"

And she laughed inside, because you never can tell from the outside when a darning needle laughs. There she sat, as proud as if she was driving in a coach, and looked all around her.

"May I be permitted to ask if you are of gold?" she asked the pin, her neighbor. "You have a very pretty appearance, and a head of your own, but it's small. You'd better let it grow, because everybody can't have sealing wax dropped on the end."

And the Darning Needle drew herself up so proudly that she fell out of the kerchief right into the sink, which the cook was rinsing out.

"Now we're going traveling," said the Darning Needle.—"If only I don't get lost!"

But she did get lost.

"I'm too fine for this world," she said, as she lay in the gutter. "But I know who I am, and there's always something in that!"

So the Darning Needle held herself straight and kept cheerful. And all sorts of things sailed over her, sticks and straws and pieces of old newspapers.

"Just look at them sail!" said the Darning Needle. "They don't know what's at the bottom. I'm at the bottom; I am here. Look, there goes a stick thinking of nothing in the world except 'stick,' and that's itself! There's a straw going by now. Look at it, twisting and turning. Don't think so much about yourself, you might hit a cobblestone! There swims a newspaper. What's written on it is forgotten, and still it spreads it-

self! I sit quietly and patiently here. I know who I am, and I shall remain what I am."

One day something lay close beside her that glittered splendidly; then the Darning Needle believed that it was a diamond; but it was a Bit of broken Bottle; and because it shone, the Darning Needle spoke to it, introducing herself as a breastpin.

"I suppose you are a diamond?" she said.

"Why, yes, something of that kind."

And then each believed the other to be a very valuable thing; and they began speaking about the world, and how very conceited it was.

"I've been living in a lady's box," said the Darning Needle, "and this lady was a cook. She had five fingers on each hand, and I never saw anything so conceited as those five fingers. And yet they were only there to hold me, to take me out of the box and to put me back into it."

"Did they shine?" asked the Bit of Bottle.

"Shine?" said the Darning Needle, "no, but they were very haughty. There were five brothers, all of the finger family. They all stood straight next to each other, though they were of different lengths: the outermost, the thumbling, was short and fat; he walked out in front of the ranks, and only had one joint in his back, and could only make a single bow; but he said that if he were hacked off a man, that whole man was useless for service in war. Lickpot, the second finger, got into sweet and sour, pointed to sun and moon, and he was the one who held the pen when they wrote. Longman, the third, looked over the heads of the others. Goldborder, the fourth, had a gold ring around his stomach, and little Peter Playman did nothing at all, and was proud of it. They were bragging, bragging all the time and then I took to the sink."

"And now we sit here and glitter!" said the Bit of Bottle.

Just then more water came into the gutter, so that it overflowed, and the Bit of Bottle was carried away.

"Well, he's promoted now," said the Darning Needle. "I remain here, I am too fine. But that's my pride, and my pride is honorable." And she sat up straight and thought of many things. "I could almost believe I had been born of a sunbeam, I'm so fine! It really seems to me that the sunbeams are always looking for me under the water. Ah! I'm so fine that my mother can't find me. If I had my old eye, which broke off, I think I could cry; but I wouldn't; it's not genteel to cry."

One day a couple of street boys were grubbing in the gutter, where they sometimes found oil nails, pennies, and other things. It was nasty, but after all that's what they liked.

"Ouch!" one of them said, he pricked himself with the Darning Needle, "that's a nice fellow!"

"I'm not a fellow, I'm a young lady!" said the Darning Needle.

But nobody listened to her. The sealing wax had come off, and she had turned black; but black makes one look slender, and she thought she was even finer than before.

"Here comes an eggshell sailing along!" said the boys; and they stuck the Darning Needle into the eggshell.

"White walls, and black myself! that looks well," said the Darning Needle. "Now I can be seen. If only I'm not seasick, because then I'll break!" But she wasn't seasick and she didn't break. "It is good for seasickness to have a steel stomach, and to remember that one is a little more than an ordinary human being! Now my seasickness is over. The finer one is, the more one can bear."

"Crack!" said the eggshell, for a wagonload went over it.

"Oh, how it pinches!" said the Darning Needle. "I'm going to get seasick anyway. I'm going to break! I'm going to break!" But it didn't break, although a waggonload went over it; it was lying the long way, and there we'll let it lie.

Booby Hans

OUT in the country lay an old manor house, and in it lived an old squire who had two sons who were twice as clever as they had any right to be. They were going to propose to the daughter of the king, and they weren't afraid to do that because she had announced that she was going to marry whoever could talk the best.

They spent eight days preparing themselves, that was all the time they had, but they knew a lot of things beforehand, and that's always useful. One of them knew the whole Latin dictionary by heart and the town newspaper for three years both forward and backward; the other had acquainted himself with the laws of all the guilds and what every alderman should know, then he could talk about state affairs, he thought; and besides that he could embroider suspenders, for he had a very delicate touch.

"I'll get the Princess!" both of them said, and then their father gave each of them a lovely horse. The one

who knew the dictionary and the newspapers got a coal-black horse, and he who knew about guilds and embroidery got a milk-white one, and then they rubbed the corners of their mouths with fish oil to make them more supple. All the servants were down in the yard to see them get on their horses, and just then the third brother came. There were three, but nobody counted him as a brother, because he wasn't such a scholar as the other two, and so they just called him Booby Hans.

"Where are you going, all dressed up like that?" he asked.

"To the court, to get the Princess by talking! Haven't you heard what they are drumming about all through the country?"

And then they told him about it.

"Good gracious, I'd better go, too, then!" said Booby Hans, and his brothers laughed at him and rode away.

"Father, let me have a horse!" shouted Booby Hans. "I feel just like getting married now. If she'll take me, then she'll take me! And if she won't take me, then I'll take her anyway!"

"What nonsense," said the father, "I won't give any horse to you. You don't know how to talk! Your brothers are different, they're wonderful fellows!"

"If I can't have a horse," said Booby Hans, "then I'll take the goat, that's my own and it carries me very well!" And then he sat astride the goat, kicked his heels into its sides, and rushed away along the highroad. Whee! what speed! "Here I come!" said Booby Hans, and sang till the noise went trailing after him.

But the brothers were riding ahead very quietly; they weren't saying a word; they were thinking up all the good ideas they were going to have; everything was going to be very clever.

"Hey, there, hello!" Booby Hans shouted, "Here I come! Look what I found on the road!" and then he showed them a dead crow he had found.

"Booby!" they said, "what do you want with that?"

"I'll make a present of that to the Princess!"

"Oh, yes, do give it to her," they said and laughed, and rode on.

"Hey there, hello! Here I come! Look what I found now; you don't find that on the road every day!"

And the brothers turned around to see what it was.

"Booby!" they said, "it's only an old wooden shoe with the uppers gone! Is the Princess going to get that too?"

"She is!" said Booby Hans, and the brothers laughed and they rode on and they got far ahead.

"Hey there, hello! Here I am!" shouted Booby Hans, "it's getting worse and worse now! Hey there! There never was anything like it!"

"What have you found now?" asked the brothers.

"Oh!" said Booby Hans, "I can hardly talk about how happy that Princess is going to be!"

"Pfui!" said the brothers, "it's nothing but mud that's been thrown right up out of the ditch."

"That's what it is!" said Booby Hans, "and it's the very finest kind, you can hardly keep hold of it!" and then he filled his pockets with it.

But the brothers rode on as fast as the horses could go, and they got there a whole hour ahead of him, and they stopped at the city gate, and there every suitor was given a number, and they were all stood in line, six in every row and so close that they couldn't move an arm. That was a good thing, too or they would have stabbed each other in the back just because one stood in front of the other.

All the rest of the country's inhabitants were standing around the castle right up against the windows to watch the Princess receive the suitors, and as each of them came into the room the power of speech departed from him.

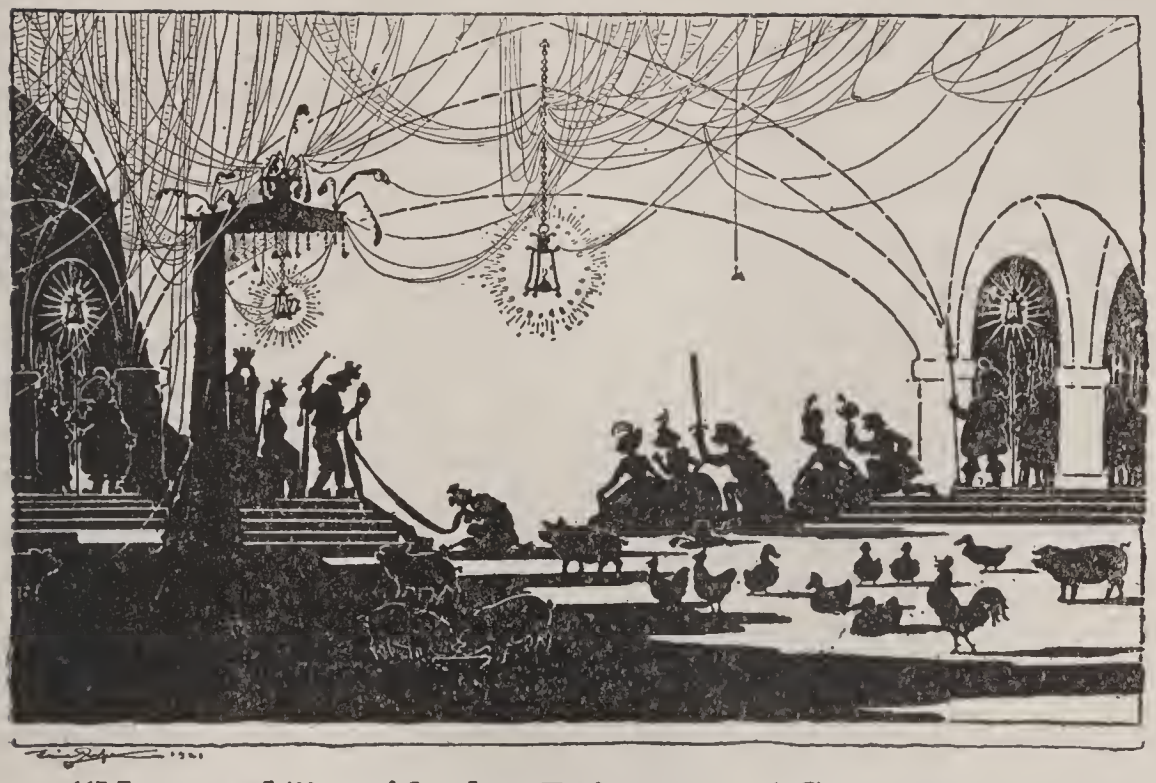
"No good!" said the Princess. "Get out!"

Now the brother came who knew the dictionary, but he had clean forgotten it by standing in line, and the floor creaked, and the ceiling was made of mirror glass, so that he saw himself standing on his head; and three scriveners and an alderman stood at every window and wrote down everything that was said so that it could be put right in the newspaper and be sold for two cents on the corner. It was terrible, and the stove was so hot that the pipe was all red.

"It's very hot in here," said the suitor.

"That's because my father is roasting cockerels today!" said the Princess.

Boo! there he stood: he hadn't expected that kind of speech; and he hadn't a word to say just when he wanted to say something funny. Boo!



"No good!" said the Princess. "Get out!" And then he had to get out. Now the second brother came.

"It's terribly hot in here," he said.

"Yes, we're roasting cockerels to-day!" said the Princess.

"What's—what?" he said, and all the scriveners wrote, "What's—what?"

"No good!" said the Princess. "Get out!"

Then Booby Hans came; he rode on the goat right into the room. "It's burning hot in here!" he said.

"That's because I'm roasting cockerels!" said the Princess.

"Isn't that nice!" said Booby Hans, "then I can get my crow roasted, I suppose."

"Certainly you can," said the Princess, "but have you anything to roast it in, because I haven't any pots or pans!"

"But I have!" said Booby Hans. "Here's a pot with tin nails!" and then he pulled the old wooden shoe out and put the crow right in it.

"That will make a whole meal!" said the Princess, "but where do we get the gravy from?"

"I have that in my pocket!" said Booby Hans. "I have such a lot I can throw some of it away!" and then he poured a little mud out of his pocket.

"That's what I like," said the Princess, "you can answer, and you can talk, and you're the man I want to marry! But do you know that every word we're saying and have said is written down and put in to-morrow's newspaper? You see there are three scriveners and an alderman standing by every window, and the alderman is the worst because he can't understand!" and she said that to scare him. And all the scriveners whinnied and dropped ink on the floor.

"Oh, are they so grand?" said Booby Hans, "then the alderman will have to have the best," and then he turned his pockets inside out and threw the mud right in his face.

"That's what I like," said the Princess, "you can done that, but I'm going to learn!"

And then Booby Hans was king, and had a wife and a crown and sat on a throne, and we got that right out of the alderman's newspaper—and you can't depend on that.

The End
E.P.

E.P.
1921

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

00025724082